REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of the over 100,000 survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse the Victoria Sexual Assault Center (VSAC) has served the past 35 years, we thank all of those that support our work. 2017 marks our 35th anniversary of providing healing, education and prevention to the community. We would like to acknowledge the leaders, the volunteers, the partners, and valued donors that have brought us to this point in time.

We began our work in December 1982 when a committed group of women applied for incorporation of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Society. The society had two paid staff and a group of trained volunteers that provided a 24 hour crisis line, accompaniment to hospital and police station, and counselling for survivors of sexual assault.

Today, we have a staff of 35 and a large base of dedicated community volunteers who proudly work with numerous community partners to enhance the quality, accessibility and reach of the services we offer. Our partners include Island Health; Forensic Nurse Examiners; Crown Council; Municipal Police Departments and RCMP Attachments in the Greater Victoria Region; Vancouver Island Crisis and Information Line Society; Victoria Native Friendship Center; ICA; VIRCS; UVic’s Anti-Violence Project and local middle and secondary schools among others. Additionally, we are proud to partner with Victoria Women’s Transition House (VWTH) in our administrative consolidation that saves overhead costs for our agency and the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre (VCAPCC) for partnering with us to create the Victoria Community Resource Centre that house VSAC’s Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic and VCAPCC’s Child and Youth Advocacy Centre.

As a feminist organization, we are dedicated to providing a full range of services that support survivors of sexual assault and historical childhood sexual abuse. These services include a crisis and information line, sexual assault response team (SART), victim services, and crisis, group, and long-term trauma-processing counselling. The services we provide go beyond just crisis intervention and offer transformative life skills and support that mitigate the long-term effects of trauma, such as PTSD, and suicide.

As we enter our 35th year, the demand for services continues to grow. In fact, we have seen a 17% increase in individuals accessing our services from last year. When we break down that statistic further, we see substantial increases across our programs, including an 183% increase in court related hours for our victim services workers, 45% increase in survivors attending group counselling, and a 30% increase in calls to our crisis and information line. Everything continues to be done to meet these rising demands; including providing services above and beyond what our government contracts cover in order to better serve those in need. However, we continually experience year-to-year funding challenges to support these growing demands. An increase in core, ongoing, and stabilized funding is the only way to ensure that any survivor who is facing violence has access to timely, compassionate and comprehensive services.

VSAC is recognized provincially as a leader in the field of trauma response and prevention. We have a proven ability to develop and deliver innovative, trauma-informed and inclusive programming that prioritizes community partnerships, increasing accessibility, and being responsive to the diverse needs of survivors. One of our most recent examples of the this is the creation of the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic B.C.’s first and only integrated sexual assault clinic. Shifting key services from the hospital and police stations to one centralized location, the clinic provides recent survivors of sexual assault with medical exams, forensic exams, crisis support, police interviews, and connections to other community resources. Since opening the clinic in February 2016, we have experienced a 80% increase in survivors accessing the services now offered at the clinic. The success of the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic demonstrates not only the effectiveness of this innovative service delivery model but represents a clear need for this clinic in the Victoria community and beyond.

We rely on various grants opportunities and donations from generous individuals in the community to keep services like the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic available to those in need. We thank all of our funders and donors for ongoing support. There is no possible way to thank each one but you can be assured that each donation leaves a legacy behind. We continue in every way to value the gifts that you provide to support the people that we serve each year. Thank you for assisting us to make a difference in many lives and supporting our work in our community.

Thank you to our funders & grant providers
Chris Spencer Foundation – Trans Inclusion; Department of Justice, Victims of Crime Week – Wellness basket and awareness raising; Government of Canada, Enabling Accessibility Fund; Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General - Stopping the Violence & Victim Services contracts; Ministry of Justice – Clinic; Province of British Columbia, Victims Assistance Program; Victoria Community Foundation – 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; Food Justice; Canadian Women’s Foundation – Project Respect; Government of Canada, Canada Summer Jobs – Project Respect; Greater Victoria Savings and Credit Union – Food Justice; Horner Foundation – Food Justice; Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program; Harweg Foundation, & Zonta Club of Greater Victoria – SART; Vancity Community Foundation – Trans Inclusion.

In our 35 years as an agency, more than 250,000 individuals and businesses have donated to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. It is incredible to know how vast the community of support is for survivors of sexualized violence. Donors create safety and stability for this organization, and those are hallmarks for healing. Our generous donors provide the critical funding needed to maintain the programs and services we offer at VSAC. Whether a donor chooses to support our agency through one of our mail campaigns, telemarketing, online, as a monthly donor or through one of our annual fundraising events like the Triathlon of Compassion or the new Fast Five Fundraiser, we are thankful for their gifts, no matter their size. Their support changes lives, and for that, we are endlessly grateful.

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.

We are with the utmost gratitude we have said goodbye to Allison Hagen and Paula Green. Thank you both for your dedication to the center and community. Lisa Jozsa has taken a leave to welcome her new baby into her family.

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.

Our Board members had a busy year as we continued our support with the agency’s awareness- and fund-raising events. In the fall an appreciation event was held for our loyal donors. Donors were treated to refreshments, while meeting VSAC staff & board members. The event was focused around a tour of the new Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, as well as giving the opportunity for donors to learn more about the work and prevention services they support. The creation of the Fast Five Fundraising campaign by the Board fundraising committee hosted a multitude of grass roots events throughout the month of March. From jewelry shows, to a movie sing-along, to a food share picnic, to a cycle challenge, each event was well attended and raised money and awareness for VSAC. The Fast Five Campaign was such a success and there was so much community interest, this event will be happening again next spring!

The Board also supported the 23rd annual Triathlon of Compassion, VSAC’s longest running fundraiser. Board members promoted, volunteered, and participated in the race!

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

Sincerely,
VSAC Board of Directors, Kelly Branchi (Co-Chair), Sean Dhillon (Co-chair), Julia Denley, Claudia Fabbri, Peter Gibbs, Gurolse Jiwani, Nat Johnstone, Lisa Jozsa, Sheldon Kitul and Melanie Litoski.

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2016-2017 EXPENSES/REVENUE BREAKDOWN

- Expenses
- Administration 9%
- Programs 57%
- Staff and Benefits 7%
- Fundraising 9%

- Revenues
- Government Contract 41%
- Donation and Fundraising 30%
- Trans Inclusion 6%
- Community Funding 3%
It has been a busy year with the sexual assault clinic’s success creating some down-stream pressures regarding callloads for the crisis and sexual assault response teams opening the clinic in Feb 2016. We have seen an increase of 80% in demand for the services of our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) over the same period last year. Interest continues to grow in collaboration with Victoria Police, Saanich Police and most recently Western RCMP utilizing the space for police interviews. Forensic Nurse Examiners, VSAC support workers, survivors and community members report that the clinic is a comfortable, calm and compassionate place where survivors can come to begin their healing. One significant challenge that has been focused on this year is to establish core funding for the clinic in order to maintain this new facility in the community.

We are working hard to address waitlists and caseload management issues. In order to reduce barriers to services we have only required survivors to participate in the Skills for Healing counselling group and strongly recommend the Building Strengths counselling group rather than having both mandatory. Our triage system for clients requiring crisis counselling is an effective structure however challenged by the high volume resulting from the clinic’s success.

One counsellor continues to work one day a week at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, and some DCS staff worked on the Pos.

New print resources have also been developed including a high graphics low text "Information and Resource for Recent Survivors of Sexualized Violence." This past fiscal was an eventful year for volunteering! We successfully ran two back to back trainings for our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), brought in 20 new SART volunteers for the crisis line team, a new SART training for sexual assault response teams. This year’s volunteer recruitment also saw a combined CORE training, three new Senior SART volunteers trained and contracted, 5 OFFFOC volunteers, 4 New Board members, 3 new volunteers and a new Manager of Direct Client Services.

This year’s volunteer recruitment also saw a combined CORE training, three new Senior SART volunteers trained and contracted, 5 OFFFOC volunteers, 4 New Board members, 3 new volunteers and a new Manager of Direct Client Services. The DCS Team has had some staff changes this year. Georgie Jackman-Beede stepped down to spend more time with her family, and Linda Amy joined the team as the new Manager of Direct Client Services (DCS). Barb Benson moved on to a new position with the Westshore RCMP, and Shannon Weinkauf and Nichol Skinner, from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, provide support with our crisis counselling and victim services programs.

One of our volunteers, Ali, shared the following with us about the work that our volunteers do. We thank them for their time and commitment. One of our volunteers, Ali, shared the following with us about the work that our volunteers do. We thank them for their time and commitment.

REPORT FROM COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEERS

Sharade Long, Coordinator of Volunteers

SART is one of the best things I’ve ever done; for my personal growth, and my contribution to the community. The training was comprehensive and challenged my social perceptions to be more inclusive in my community. It was constantly inspired by diverse knowledge keepers and SKFCC volunteers to work with.

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REPORT FROM TRANS INCLUSION COORDINATOR

Alexa Robin, Trans Inclusion Coordinator

This has been a busy and fulfilling year for Trans Inclusion, and this marks the fourth year of our ongoing Trans Inclusion program at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC). The Trans Inclusion program works to enhance our services by becoming more effective and accessible for Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse survivors and works to address the needs of the community and context (with the backing of the Vancouver Foundation for our second phase of this project) across Vancouver Island.

A few highlights from this past year include the creation and distribution of a new booklet to aid Forensic Nurse Examiners and other service providers who are supporting and working with Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse survivors of sexualized violence. This booklet contains important and relevant information every supporter should be familiar with and can be found on our resources page at www.vsac.ca/resources.

Additionally, we’re also starting a group specifically for survivors who are Trans, Two-Spirit, Gender Diverse, Gender Non-Conforming, or Gender Queer. We hope that the more restricted nature of this group will make our space more comfortable and accessible for survivors from these communities, and more information about this group can be found at www.namv.ca/foundations/.

We’re deeply grateful to have been able to continue this important work and so excited about the future. SHIFT: This past year we completed the fourth and final year of our SHIFT project, 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 middle and secondary schools that supports youth aged 12 to 15 to lead anti-violence campaigns 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 in creating inclusion, produced music videos with alternative anti-violence themed lyrics, and created poster campaigns, among other action projects. Throughout these four years, the program has built students’ leadership capacities 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, students who were part of the program voiced the desire to be involved in creating awareness and knowledge to the new group of participants. While our funding for SHIFT has come to an end, we continue to use this highly effective anti-violence leadership training as the foundation of new programming.

Challenges: Funding cuts and reduced staffing capacity continue to impact the ways we are able to provide our vital youth-led education and action programming. As we move into year five of our SHIFT program, we hope to offer this violence prevention and healthy relationships education for the past 18 years. Project Respect has no core funding and unfortunately we find it most challenging to secure funding from our current funders as many funders are seeking to fund new projects rather than existing initiatives, despite the clear need for and success of this existing programming.

REPORT FROM PREVENTION

Elioa Loiselie, Prevention Manager

Project Respect, a sexualized violence prevention program of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC). Project Respect engages 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 Victoria, including 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 skillfully facilitated, safe spaces for youth to speak about their experiences, and help them develop skills to resist, and create positive alternatives to the hurt (normalized) messages they receive about gender, relationships, sexuality, and violence. Project Respect works with school based, relationship, and societal level change, through focused work to acknowledge, understand, and create change.

Staffing: In Spring 2016, Prevention Manager Elioa Loiselie returned from parental leave. We said a sad good-bye to Interim Prevention Manager Chaw-win-is, whose contributions, including the development of Project Respect’s Indigenous food justice program, have continued to deepen our anti-colonial work at VSAC. Chaw-win-is continues to support the work of the Centre as a guest speaker and facilitator at volunteer and staff trainings. Several amazing staff joined our team this past fiscal year. Project Respect hired Kim Smith as the new Prevention Coordinator. Rebecca Watts joined our team as the Food Justice Coordinator, working with youth staff Adelaide Elliott and Sage Lacerte to design and implement our Rooted in Respect youth-led social action camp. Additionally, our dynamic and highly skilled team of prevention educators who facilitate in schools and includes Amy Mass, Vatican, Living on the Edge, Galaxy Adams, Anna McLean, Dacra Recalma, Elodie Button, Hannah Mang, Wooley, Matt Davidsik and Mg Neufheil.

Rooted in Respect: Resisting Violence through Food Justice: This past year has been a rewarding one for Project Respect. Rooted in Respect, our Indigenous-led food justice program, engaging Indigenous youth in exploring the connections between sexualized violence, colonization and food justice. Sage Lacerte, one of the youth leaders of Project Respect, shares her experiences about her involvement with Rooted in Respect: in Summer 2016, Project Respect was proud to model a youth in Residence for Food Justice Camp! Rooted in Respect hopes to create a beautiful community where youth of indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds can share their knowledge and personal experiences about food, culture and respect for the land, ourselves and the people. We are working to bring you in on the glorious lush animal and plant life. We took the opportunity to explore our local food systems and how they negatively impact Indigenous people. We show you what specifically has sustained the folks who have lived here for centuries. We were welcomed with open arms by many throughout the community including Welland Orchard where we were able to harvest countless pounds of fresh, healthy food. We also grazed at traditional food producing areas and learned about traditional indigenous foods, and Beangaik Elliott who gifted the group with a trip to what is known as Tod Inlet where we began our journey. We brought home food from leaves, berries, roots, and wild plants.

The day of our camp ended with a gratitude circle. Everyone involved (who started out as strangers!) shared how grateful they were that the time was able to spend quality time together and enjoy sharing stories about the many different ways food binds all of us together and can heal.

The Rooted in Respect Food Justice Program is generously funded by the Horner Foundation and the Victoria Foundation.