

VICTORIA WOMEN'S

Transition House SOCIETY

Supporting Women and Children fleeing intimate partner violence and abuse

Holiday Cheer at the Shelter

Christmas can be a stressful and challenging time for many, but for a woman living in a violent and abusive home, the Holidays can be particularly difficult.

Some abused women decide to wait until after Christmas to consider leaving their abusive partner. They don't want to disrupt their family over the Holidays and think that their children will have bad memories linked with Christmas from leaving the family home. The reality is that most women who come to the Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) Emergency Shelter from an abusive relationship, experience an overwhelming feeling of relief, of safety and support. For the first time in a long time, they feel safe, valued and cared for – and the Holiday period is no different.

The Holiday Season can be an exciting and festive time at our Shelter. The VWTH staff set-up a large Christmas tree in the living room and invite the women and children residents to decorate. Children make gingerbread houses with their moms or an activity worker and there are Christmas books, holiday activities and crafts to share with the little ones.

Volunteers bake seasonal cookies and Christmas music fills the air. For Christmas dinner, a delicious, home-cooked meal is prepared by the house manager and volunteers and is served on festively decorated tables, with homemade centrepieces, individual menus and Christmas crackers – always a favourite with the children. And the meal is topped off with a variety of delicious desserts like apple pie and chocolate mousse.

"As a team, we strive to make all of our clients and children happy here and as comfortable as possible. Women and children have left their homes during this time of celebration. Women are dealing with the fact that they've left a partner...we want them to feel loved, cared for and supported," shared the shelter manager.

"Everyone in our community is experiencing isolation due to the pandemic. Residents have the compounded barrier of experiencing abuse and violence in their

lives. As a client-centred organization, we support the women and children to enjoy their Holidays in a safe space and in a way that is appropriate for them," explained the shelter manager. "And residents who do not celebrate Christmas are still invited to partake in the festivities if they wish."

With the onset of COVID-19 and the ballooning need for emergency shelter and support, **VWTH has added a second Shelter location** where clients can stay and receive on-site counselling and resource supports. Both Shelters will have a beautifully decorated tree with a gift for every woman and child. They will have a nourishing dinner and make new positive memories for themselves. "All of our services, including women's and children's counselling and childminding support, will remain open and available throughout the Holiday period," emphasized the shelter manager. We will make it work, as will everyone this Holiday season.



Christmas Hampers

2020 has been a challenging and unpredictable year for everybody, and all the more so for the women and children who have visited our Emergency Shelter or who have accessed our counselling and support services. Although the recommended safety precautions around COVID-19 prevent us from running our regular Christmas Hamper Program, we truly hope our modified version will serve to provide our clients with the same joy and relief others have experienced in past years.

NEW THIS YEAR: Gift Card Hampers - We will be matching individuals, families and corporate donors with a VWTH clients - either a single woman or a family. Each donor will be provided with a gift card wish list from a woman/mother so that she can purchase Holiday groceries, gifts for her children and some special gifts and treats for herself and her family. We invite community members to join the program and become donors. For more information, please email christmas@vwth.bc.ca or visit our website, transitionhouse.com and click on Support Us and Christmas Hamper Program. We thank all generous donors for their heartwarming contributions.



Our Mission


Victoria Women's Transition House Society (VWTH) collaborates, advocates and educates to address and prevent intimate partner violence and abuse of women and children through supportive shelter, housing, counselling and other community-based services.

How to Reach Us

Crisis and Information Line
250.385.6611

 250.592.2927

 info@vwth.bc.ca

 transitionhouse.net

Charitable No. 10817 3501 RR0001

From a Grateful Woman*...

To the wonderful women at Transition House, Thank you. Thank you for being my part in the storm.

Thank you for walking with me though my emotional uncertainty over the phone as I left (unsuccessfully the first time), as I prepared to leave again and during those intensely confusing and turbulent first weeks after getting out.

Thank you for giving me a safe space to breathe, to feel, to process and to plan. For validating each chaotic thought & emotion I had and for helping talk me out of some dark corners.

Thank you for your honesty, your education and sharing your wisdom.

Thank you for making me feel safe, secure, validated, confident in my decision and wrapped in warmth & love.

Thanks for caring about (my children), making (them) feel welcoming ...

I honestly think I would have gone back if it wasn't for the support I have received and it's forever changed the path and my joy, light and freedom to live life on my own terms.

There is no greater gift than that.

Thank you xoxox

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." ~ Maya Angelou

**Name withheld for privacy*



Eight Things Men Can Do to Prevent Gender Violence

Adapted from the work of Jackson Katz

- 1. It's a Men's Issue.** Approach gender violence as a men's issue involving all ages and socio-economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers.
- 2. Speak Up.** If a brother, friend, colleague or teammate is abusing his female partner, or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women, don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help.
- 3. Have the courage to look inward.** Question your own attitudes. Don't make excuses. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work towards changing them.
- 4. Offer Support.** If you suspect a woman close to you is being abused, gently ask how you can help her. Offer her the VWTH Crisis & Information Line number 250.385.6611, staffed 24-hours a day.
- 5. Seek professional help NOW** if you are emotionally, psychologically, physically or sexually abusive to women or have been in the past.


- 6. Don't fund sexism.** Refuse to purchase any magazine, subscribe to any media service provider, stream or download any images, or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.



- 7. Support Victoria Women's Transition House.** Join us in our work to end all forms of violence and abuse against women. Consult our website and social media channels and find ways to attend our virtual events and information sessions, during the pandemic. Make a personal donation to VWTH and help raise funds for our organizations so that we can continue our prevention and intervention work. If you belong to an association, company, team or student group, organize a fundraiser.


- 8. Lead by example.** Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with a gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexism men's programs.

Chuck and Greg (above) are VWTH supporters.

 **Thank you for the safety of this house. When I felt afraid, the walls surrounded me with security. Your compassion and understanding have touched me deeply. It is humbling to know that people actually care.** ~ Shelter client

Victoria Women's Transition House is a registered charity and donations are gratefully appreciated. Give online at transitionhouse.net or call **250.592.2927**, Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm. We need your help now more than ever!

Identified individuals have given their permission for photo publication. Others are models.

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24-Hour Crisis & Information Line: 250.385.6611