



December 2016



Garden of Hope *Healing the self through mixed media*

Garden of Hope was an art-group project that ran for ten evenings and was tailored for older women clients of Victoria Women's Transition House. The program was developed to strengthen the bond between women with similar past traumatic experiences who share future common goals. Selected participants had experience in group work and enjoyed the creative arts.

The women worked with a variety of materials including individual canvases (of all sizes), assorted acrylic paints, brushes and a wooden garden box frame. The project's goal was to create a symbolic garden that represented the participant's growth within the program and their achievements.

Each woman selected a symbolic flower for this project – iris, tulip, daisy, orchid or sunflower – and

painted it onto a canvas before symbolically planting it in the garden box. Participants were also encouraged to keep a diary where they recorded their weekly thoughts on this metaphoric garden box. In addition, a counsellor facilitated a weekly group session for the women using the floral symbols as a launch-

point to discuss each woman's personal journey.

The participants enjoyed working together in this creative endeavor. They seriously engaged in

the creative process of choosing their flower of choice and working together to create The Garden of Hope. The project was a creative way to bring the women closer together and increasing their understanding and empathy towards each other.
~ VWTH Women's Counsellor



Christmas Hampers

Thanks to generous contributions from our community, the VWTH Christmas Hamper Program is in full swing and is an incredible display of generosity and kindness. Friends, families and co-workers come together to create and distribute over 100 personalized Christmas Hampers for women and children in our community. Thank you, everyone!



Mission

Victoria Women's Transition House Society, working collaboratively, provides shelter, support, counselling and education to women of all ages, with or without children, so that they can live free from the effects of abuse in intimate relationships. The Society strives to prevent and eliminate abuse through education, advocacy and partnerships.

Girls Group

Adolescence is a sensitive stage in a teenager's life. For girls who have experienced the trauma of abuse, adolescence is a time when personal coping mechanisms emerge to help regulate emotions, but can sometimes create challenges for a girl in her relationship with herself and others.

For teenage girls who have been exposed to domestic abuse in their homes during this critical age, it is an enormous challenge to process and cope with experiences and emotions caused by trauma that they have witnessed in their family. At Victoria Women's Transition House, our Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) program has created an initiative to respond to the specific needs of our clients who are teenage girls.

Facilitated by dedicated CWWA counsellors, we offer a 10-week group counselling program focused on girls ages 12-17 years old. It is similar to other CWWA group programs, but covers themes and topics that relate

specifically to girls' lives. Key concepts include building confidence and trust; growing and sustaining friendships & relationships; regulating emotions; setting goals and making good decisions; dealing with stress; boundary setting; and self-love and self-expression. In this

90-minute weekly group session, girls have a chance to express themselves through journaling, drama, visual arts, Digital Storytelling (see story, below), and other creative activities. In addition, different professionals and experts in the community are invited as guest speakers to share their expertise and lead educational segments such as yoga and meditation, sexual health education, resume writing, journal writing and many more.



If you know anyone who might benefit from participating in the VWTH Girls Group Counselling program, contact our Information Line at 250.385.6611.



Recently, two representatives from Vancouver's Atira Women's Resource Society came to VWTH to deliver a two-day digital storytelling workshop to enthusiastic VWTH counsellors and staff. Digital Storytelling is the creation of a two-to-three-minute mini-video using an I-Pad and incorporating video, photos, text, music and voice. The VWTH Children Who Witness Abuse counselling team is excited to start incorporating digital storytelling into their counselling practice, giving their young clients an opportunity to express themselves while healing from the impacts of witnessing violence and abuse in their home. A special thank you to all who funded this new initiative including **Telus, Smart Dolphins IT Solutions, Island Savings and individual donors.**

The Shelter

Where Hope Grows

- 1** **A Crisis Line Call**
Each year, over 2,000 crisis line calls are answered by Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) crisis line staff and trained volunteers.
A woman spends a minimum of 25-minutes on the phone. She may call multiple times before she's able or ready to leave her current situation.
- 2** **The Decision to Leave**
Taking this step requires courage and support and may happen after many calls to the Crisis Line. VWTH staff work with each woman to prepare for her arrival and assist her in making this change.
- 3** **A Warm Welcome**
Each woman who arrives at the Shelter, alone or with her children, is greeted by a VWTH Women's Counsellor. After an intake, a Shelter tour and a warm meal, these new residents take some time to settle into their new surroundings.
- 4** **Surrounded by Support**
Every woman is assigned a Women's Counsellor during her stay and her children have access to on-site counselling and activities. Support is available to all Shelter residents, on-site, 24-hours a day. Once she leaves the Shelter, a woman can access counselling and support services from the VWTH Community Office.
- 5** **Dealing with the Details**
A woman and her children can stay at the Shelter for up to 30 days.
While at the Shelter, VWTH staff help her create a safety plan and consider referrals for long-term counselling for herself and for her children. Staff can assist her to apply for financial support, source legal assistance, coordinate medical appointments and childcare, and secure accommodations for when she leaves the Shelter.
- 6** **Moving On**
After 30-days at the Shelter and with support systems in place, a woman will move forward with her next steps including the option for continued access to VWTH counselling and services, while she begins an independent life, free from relationship violence and abuse.

24-Hour Information and Crisis Line: 250-385-6611

For more information on VWTH programs and services, please visit transitionhouse.net

Please note: The VWTH Emergency Shelter is located in a quiet, friendly Victoria neighbourhood in a confidential location.

Fashion for Transition – THANK YOU!

On Thursday, October 13th, more than 160 guests raised the roof in the David Foster Theatre at the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, where Victoria Women's Transition House was hosted as the proud beneficiary of ***Fashion for Transition***, an evening of style and philanthropy, featuring highlights from the fall collections of Victoria boutiques ***Tulipe Noir*** and ***Outlooks for Men***. A vibrant parade of men's and women's fashions were presented on more than a dozen models, accompanied to upbeat music, wine, canapés and a lively silent auction. Presented by ***Willow Wealth Management*** – ***Raymond James*** and hosted by ***Tess van Straaten*** from CHEK News, Fashion for Transition was a terrific success raising \$10,000+ in support of the VWTH Emergency Shelter and women's and children's counselling programs. Thank you to all the sponsors, donors, participants, volunteers and models. Special thanks to the event committee ***Kirsty Thomson, Kari McLay, Dale Olsen, Janet Ricciuti, Jason Parkhill, Jody Hollis, Tess van Straaten*** and event organizer, ***Stuart Cameron***.



Save the Date! Registration opens December 1 for the 6th Annual Victoria Goddess Run, **Sunday, June 4, 2017**. VWTH is one of three beneficiaries of this women-only event that includes 5K, 10K and 15K run/walk, Kids Run, Sunset Yoga, Bathrobe Run and so much more. For more details visit victoriagoddess.com/



Legacy Giving

Maggie was a quiet, sensitive 21-year old bride profoundly in love with her new husband. She moved from her family home into her husband's life and they had four beautiful children.

Maggie cared deeply for her husband and children but life took a sharp turn when her husband's family business ran into serious financial difficulty. Drinking hard, her husband became volatile and experienced mood swings. Dodging his unpredictable temper, her self-esteem crumbling, Maggie stayed in the marriage for years "for the sake of the children" before finally asking for a divorce.

Terrified, broke and on her own for the first time in her life, Maggie harnessed her creativity and resourcefulness and used her homemaking and mothering experience to look after seniors in their homes. She realized that with financial aid, she could go back to school and get a diploma to support her career path, working with seniors. Now

comfortable in her modest life, Maggie wants to give back. She has named Victoria Women's Transition House in her will, to remember that person she once was and to help other vulnerable women find safety and support.

Victoria Women's Transition House is profoundly grateful for the support provided by donors like Maggie who have arranged for a Legacy Gift in support of women and children fleeing domestic abuse.

Your Legacy Gift to Victoria Women's Transition House will help make a life-changing difference to women and children accessing our Emergency Shelter and recovering from the effects of domestic violence and abuse.

For more information on our Legacy Giving Program please contact Susan K.E. Howard, Development Director, Victoria Women's Transition House, 250-592-2927 ext 210 or susanh@vwth.bc.ca.



YES! I wish to support Victoria Women's Transition House

I would like to give a gift of:

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \$ _____

A tax receipt will be issued
for all donations over \$10



Mail: 100 - 3060 Cedar Hill Rd.
Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

Online: Visit transitionhouse.net and click on **Donate**

Phone: Call 250-592-2927 to make a credit card donation

☐ Enclosed is my cheque payable to Victoria Women's Transition House

I prefer to use my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AmEx

Card No: _____ Expiry: _____/_____/_____

Cardholder Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____ ☐ Sign up for e-news

☐ Please send me information about donating stocks or securities

☐ Please contact me about monthly giving

☐ Please send me information about making a gift in my will to VWTH

☐ I have already included VWTH in my will



Victoria Women's Transition House - Programs and Services

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE (250-385-6611)

Support and information for women who are currently experiencing abuse or who have been abused in the past. The Crisis Line is operated by professional staff and trained volunteers, providing compassionate and non-judgmental service.

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Safe, supportive, accommodation in a confidential location for women, with or without children, escaping violence and abuse. The 18-bed Shelter includes accommodation and meals, support and counselling services, community services referrals, childcare and children's programs. Maximum stay is 30 days.

CHILDREN WHO WITNESS ABUSE PROGRAM (CWWA)

This program helps to stop the inter-generational cycle of abuse. Individual and group counselling helps children recognize abusive behaviour, learn how to deal with their experiences, and consider alternatives to violence in their own behaviour. The program provides public education about the effects of witnessing abuse and dating violence prevention presentations for public schools and community groups. A children's Summer Camp and specialized Girls Group is also offered.

SPOUSAL ASSAULT VICTIM SUPPORT PROGRAM

Support to victims of assault, threats, or criminal harassment by an intimate partner or ex-partner. Women are provided with short-term counselling, safety-planning, emotional support, court accompaniment and referrals to community agencies as their cases proceed through the criminal justice system.

STOPPING THE VIOLENCE COUNSELLING PROGRAM (STV)

Individual and group supportive counselling for women who are currently experiencing abuse, who are leaving or have left their abusive relationships. The program provides services in the community for women who may or may not have been in the Shelter, offering group and individual counselling services.

REGIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT (RDVU)

This team model includes police, community-based victim service workers and a Ministry of Children and Family Development Social Worker. The unit conducts investigations, formal risk assessments, safety planning and victim support for high-risk domestic violence cases.

THIRD STAGE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

22 affordable one-bedroom suites where women can stay for up to three years. This is supportive, transitional housing for single women aged 40 to 65 who have left abusive relationships. The supports on-site help residents become independent and self-reliant through counselling, activities, programs and life skills training.

OLDER WOMEN'S OUTREACH/SAFE HOME PROGRAM

Support for older women age 50+ as they navigate the challenges of establishing a life free of violence and abuse. Supports include Safe House, advocacy, counselling and specialty programs.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Education and training for professionals such as social workers, lawyers, health care providers, counsellors, police groups and victim service workers. Presentations and workshops on violence against women and abuse in relationships are delivered to university and college students, community groups, service clubs, church groups and businesses.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are active in VWTH programs and services and receive extensive and intensive training. Training programs are interactive, combine theory with practice, and provide volunteers with tools needed for the specific volunteer placement.

***All programs and services are offered to clients, free of charge.*

CRISIS LINE: 250.385.6611

Community Office

100 – 3060 Cedar Hill Rd.

Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

transitionhouse.net

Charitable No. 10817 3501 RR0001

Phone: 250.592.2927

Fax: 250.592.9279

Email: info@vwth.bc.ca



Like us on Facebook



tweet us @VictoriaWTH

Production of this newsletter was generously supported by:

