



## *Violence Is Preventable Project: Exploring the Great Outdoors*

As summer folds into fall, we reflect on a season filled with inspirational children's counselling support programs based in nature.

This year, in addition to the popular children's summer camp program, Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) piloted a new nine-week project in partnership with Spencer Middle School. Fun, nature-based outdoor activities utilized the concepts and curriculum from Violence is Preventable (VIP) in-school workshops, moving activities from the classroom to the outdoors in support of youth at risk, age 11-13 and their caregivers, through nature-based play combined with outdoor skill development.

Each week, eight youth and school staff met Transition House counsellors at a selected outdoor location and enjoyed explorative hikes, outdoor games and learning new skills, including shelter and fire building. The children roasted s'mores over a campfire, were introduced to mindfulness exercises and engaged in role-playing and improvisational performances all while exploring coping strategies and ways to self-regulate feelings through activities based in nature.

Throughout the project we saw our young clients meet new friends, explore new activities for the first time, and find comfort to learn that other kids have gone through similar experiences - witnessing violence and abuse in the home. One participant shared that they felt "they belonged" in the group. VWTH children's



counsellor Nate added: "I felt privileged to facilitate the program. The conversations we had in the outdoor settings in nature were really, really rich."

VWTH looks forward to continuing this successful outdoor project as well as delivering the in-school VIP workshop presentations, this fall.

### **About VIP - Prevention and Education**

Victoria Women's Transition House provides support and assistance to children and youth who have witnessed violence and abuse in the home. In addition to individual counselling, we offer Violence is Preventable (VIP), 75-90 minute in-school, interactive workshops for children and youth on age-appropriate topics such as healthy communication, consent and

accountability, emotional regulation, boundaries and more. These sessions help youth to identify and prevent abuse in their lives and equip them with skills to create healthy personal relationships.

To book a free VIP workshop for your school or youth group or for more information, call **250.592.2927**.

## **Donor Reflection**

*The VWTH crisis line, personal counselling and PEACE/Children Who Witness Abuse program saved my life. I am deeply indebted to the wonderful women who helped me and my girls break the cycle and start a new life. I am grateful to be able to give back.*

– S, Past Client and Donor

## **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.



## *From Hurt to Healing: Five Tools to Help Cope With the Impacts of Abuse*

Every year, millions of women experience intimate partner violence (IPV) and abuse by an intimate partner or spouse. Regardless of the form of abuse or the extent—whether carried out in a single incident or as a repetitive cycle—abuse can have a lasting impact on the survivor. VWTH's Stopping the Violence (STV) Program works with survivors to develop individualized tools to cope with the effects of abuse. We connected with a counsellor from the program to share a few suggestions.

### **1. Reclaim your self-esteem**

Self-esteem is how we think and feel about ourselves. Engaging in daily positive self-talk with statements such as "I deserve to be treated with respect" or "I am strong and capable of making decisions for myself" can help to overcome negative self-talk. Regular affirmations and positive statements can help recognize and internalize personal qualities we possess and rebuild self-esteem.

### **2. Set appropriate boundaries**

Boundaries can be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological and are rules and limits we set for ourselves. Reflecting on our internal and external limits and using honest communication to uphold personal boundaries, helps us build and maintain healthy and respectful interpersonal relationships.

### **3. Practice assertive communication**

Being assertive means stating your honest feelings or opinions while not violating the rights of another person. To practice assertive communication, think about a specific scenario. Pre-plan what you can say or do, what information you need in advance and reflect on how the person might respond.

When a situation arises, use clear "I" statements and body language, e.g., standing straight, making eye contact and speaking in a firm but calm manner. It is best to try and deal with feelings or concerns immediately. However, if you do not feel ready, wait.



### **4. Foster self-caring routines**

Practicing regular self-care is important for our mental health and wellbeing and creates space in our day-to-day to help process and self-regulate feelings and experiences, which allows us to better cope with daily stressors and challenges. There are many ways to practice self-care. Find and practice what works for you.

### **5. Remember, you are not alone**

Learning to cope with and overcome the impacts of IPV and abuse can be difficult and take time. But we do not have to do it alone. Regularly reaching out to trusted family and friends to stay connected can help us feel less isolated, and seeking out counselling services and community programs can also help us access support that helps us deal with and heal from the impacts of abuse.

VWTH offers community-based support groups and STV counselling for survivors of abuse. To learn more about our programs, visit [transitionhouse.net/our-programs/counselling-support](https://transitionhouse.net/our-programs/counselling-support). If you need immediate support, call our 24-hour Crisis and Information Line at **250.385.6611**.

## **Orange Shirt Day**



September 30 marks **Orange Shirt Day** and the second **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**. This date honours the lost children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities and encourages reflection while commemorating the true history and trauma faced by Indigenous people.

VWTH continues its commitment to the process of reconciliation. Transition House staff will join the "Every Child Matters" campaign and wear orange t-shirts to honour the thousands of survivors and victims and raise awareness of the devastating legacy of residential schools. Visit [orangeshirtday.org](https://orangeshirtday.org) to order shirts, buttons and pins and the **Victoria Orange Shirt Day Facebook** page for information about upcoming local events.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Board of Directors invites you to attend Victoria Women's Transition House's Annual General Meeting. Join us for updates and highlights as we mark another year serving women and children escaping intimate partner violence and abuse.

**Tuesday, September 20, 2022**

**2:00 - 3:30pm**

**Location: Online via Zoom**

RSVP to Laura Reniero at [laurar@vwth.bc.ca](mailto:laurar@vwth.bc.ca). We hope to see you there.



## Board Member Spotlight: In Conversation with Maurine Karagianis

After spending over 20 years in public office, Maurine was determined to continue advocacy work in her retirement. "Having worked with VWTH as an MLA, I realized how outstanding VWTH is and a natural place for me to focus my energy," she shared. We connected with Maurine to learn about her journey on the Board and with Transition House.



### Tell us a little about yourself and why you joined VWTH's Board of Directors

I joined VWTH via the Housing Committee just after the government shared their plans to implement much more aggressive housing plans. I wanted to encourage VWTH to apply for funds to build new housing, which they have been able to secure. After that, I joined the Board of Directors and have been a member for two years.

### What is the role of the Board of Directors?

I think our Board brings a number of skills into play. Our responsibilities include fiscal oversight and assisting with strategic planning. We work closely

with the Executive Director and staff to collectively ensure that as a vital service in the region, VWTH is implementing best practices and looking ahead to see how we can continue to grow and build the organization.

We want to help ensure VWTH continues its essential work in a society where intimate partner violence (IPV), abuse and family violence sadly continues. We've seen during COVID-19 that IPV is not going away, and this amplifies the need for more and better services.

### What is the Board most looking forward to over the next year?

The Board is currently involved in two important initiatives:

Outreach and advocacy at the government level to try and secure predictable, adequate multi-year funding and building partnerships with financial and local governments and the new West Shore housing project. This project will mean the addition of multi-level short-term and long-term VWTH transitional housing for those trying to break away from IPV and abuse. This project is very exciting for us as it will expand our organization and speaks to the growing needs of women and children trying to re-establish their lives.

Maurine will be accepting the role of Board-Chair from the incumbent, Dawn Robson, this fall. We are grateful for all the work our Board does in continuing with our mission to support and empower women and children escaping abusive situations.



Transition House is a proud partner with Will Power, a national public education effort to inspire more Canadians to make a significant impact on the causes they care about, with a gift in their Will to charity. For more information, visit VWTH's Will Power page at [willpower.ca/charities/victoria-womens-transition-house](http://willpower.ca/charities/victoria-womens-transition-house) or contact Susan Howard, Development and Communications Director, at **250.592.2927 ext. 210** or [susanh@vwth.bc.ca](mailto:susanh@vwth.bc.ca).

It is with much respect to the Lekwungen and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples of the W̱SÁNEĆ, Esquimalt, and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories the Victoria Women's Transition House Society is located, that we make this acknowledgment with the expressed shared hope to live in communities free of intimate partner violence.

## Expressive Arts and Wellness Programs for women 50+



VWTH is excited to host and facilitate several small group creative arts and health and wellness programs for women over the age of 50 this fall and winter.

### Turning the Tide

Duration: 8-weeks

This expressive arts project explores stories, art, the creative process and focuses on empowerment, connection, and self-discovery through creative expression. Two 8-week sessions will take place in the fall and winter.

### Strength: Resilience and Reflection

Duration: 10-weeks

This health and wellness project features guests from different disciplines and will focus on supporting healthy aging and addressing social isolation as well as mental and emotional health.

### Healing through the Arts

Duration: 8-weeks

Held in partnership with the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, the project offers visual arts creation guided by a professional artist and instructor.

These projects are free and open to women of all abilities. All supplies provided. For more information and to register, contact our outreach counsellor at **250-592-2927 ext. 223**. Registration follows an intake meeting.

We are grateful to **The Tony & Mignon Fenton Trust, The District of Oak Bay, CRD Arts Commission** and **individual donors** for funding these initiatives.

Participant artwork shared with permission.

# With Our Thanks

Victoria Women's Transition House thanks **The Lake Family's All One Fund**, the **A & S Murphy Family Fund** and the **Pitts Family Foundation** for their generous contributions. Our thanks also to **Victoria Foundation's Community Grants Program** in support of the **VWTH Stopping the Violence Substance Abuse Counselling** as well as gifts through funds held at Victoria Foundation from the **Alacs Fund** and the **MaryMax Fund**.

Our sincere thanks to **Katharine Burr, John Windsor, Patricia Firth, Terry and Sherril Medd, Patricia Pitts, Sandra Mayzell** and the folks at **FriesenPress** for their generous contributions.

Thanks to the **Compassion in Action Transferrable Fund** through Vancouver Foundation for the grant to purchase new blankets and bedding for the Emergency Shelter; to the **Sara Spencer Foundation** for funds for a new chest freezer at the Shelter; and to the **Times Colonist Christmas Fund** for their support of the Food Security Project.

We are grateful to the **District of Oak Bay** for their continued support of *Turning the Tide: An Expressive Arts*

*Project for Older Women* and to **Peninsula Co-op** for contributions to *PEACE Children's Camps*.

Thanks to eight Victoria-area **Shoppers Drug Mart** locations for collecting donations from customers and staff as part of the Love You campaign for women's health; to the **Independent Order of Oddfellows Columbia Lodge #2** for contributions raised through a dinner-auction event; to staff at the **Fairmont Empress Hotel** for funds raised through an internal staff bake sale; to the **Huntingdon Manor Hotel** for donations collected at the Canada Day pancake breakfast; and to our good friends from **the Modern Real Estate Team** who hosted a delicious "Sweet Treats for Shelter" ice cream fundraiser to raise funds for three local women's shelters, including VWTH.

Our heartfelt thanks go to Pete Shepherd at **Salish Sea Stones** for gifts of whimsical hand-painted healing stones for clients and staff.

These are only highlights of the many generous monetary and gifts-in-kind received over the last few months. Thank you to everyone for your support!



## 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 Road Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

**Online:** Visit [transitionhouse.net](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition House**  
SOCIETY

**Crisis and Information Line**  
250.385.6611

**Community Office**  
Suite 100-3060 Cedar Hill Road  
Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

☎ 250.592.2927

✉ [info@vwth.bc.ca](mailto:info@vwth.bc.ca)

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