



Summer Camp: Finding Positives During a Pandemic

Since June, PEACE Program counsellors have been meeting children and youth clients in the community, on a one-to-one basis, or with a sibling group. "We are most often meeting in outdoor spaces, and when we are doing an indoor activity, we are following precautions and COVID-19 protocols," shared one of our counsellors.

This year's camp activities include hiking, kayaking, picnics, painting pottery, Flying Squirrel Trampoline Park, Wild Play Adventure Park (the zipline and adventure course are favourites), beach visits, ice cream, and playing at parks. By the end of summer, dozens of children and youth will have enjoyed and benefited from a vibrant and supportive camp program—with a total of more than 75 camp sessions from June to August.

"As a client-centred initiative, we have adapted our Summer Camp to address the needs of clients and families." highlighted a second counsellor. "We are always finding ways to

meet clients in locations that are accessible and tailor the sessions to the child's interests and age, with activities that are 30 minutes to two hours in duration."

When asked about the challenges of a modified camp, the counsellor shared, "you can't replace group sessions as this is where clients can connect with other young people in similar situations and share their feelings. That said, group sessions are not for everyone. Factors such as challenges making friends, shyness and anxiety can all play a part. Meeting out in the community and having unique one-to-one sessions with some kids has been very valuable and is something we will continue post-COVID-19."

As we look to the future, VWTH will reflect on experiences from the modified programs and consider the possibilities for both group and one-on-one summer camp sessions, all with an eye to continue supporting vulnerable children and youth.



Reflections

Thank you so much. Lena really enjoyed the camp session and has not stopped talking about how much she enjoyed it. I can't express in words how much your support is helping her right now. I'm so grateful - it was great to see her smile, get outside and be so happy.*

- Client Caregiver, PEACE Program
*Name has been changed for confidentiality.

Many of the children and youth that I work with have experienced much more isolation, stress and tension in their homes and personal lives during COVID-19. As a counsellor, it has felt rewarding to be able to offer a chance for our clients to connect, have fun, and process through the various difficulties they're facing, in a manner that is therapeutic and fun.

- Counsellor, PEACE Program

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

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Emergency Shelter Update

Throughout the pandemic, VWTH has made significant health and safety adjustments to continue to provide safe Shelter, counselling and support to women and their children fleeing intimate partner violence and abuse.

Since the beginning of COVID-19, we have added plexiglass barriers in high traffic areas and increased our cleaning and sanitation procedures.

We require everyone on-site to wear a mask and conduct daily health checks for staff and residents. We have also added an option for Shelter clients to stay at a safe, alternate location where they can safely self-isolate, and where we continue to



provide on-site counselling and resource supports as well as weekly groceries and supply drop-offs.

One recognized problem was that the Shelter currently only has one central desktop computer shared between 18 residents. Providing individual computers in each of the Shelter's bedrooms will make it easier for residents to physically distance and safely connect to other VWTH and community support programs, make legal, medical and housing appointments and search for work. The computers will also allow women and their children to watch a movie or show from the safety of their bedrooms.



Thanks to generous funders, we will now be able to purchase computers, a few printers, some desks, chairs and table lamps, tech installation and support services. In addition, we will be able to install small wall safes in each bedroom, providing safety and security for each resident's medication.

VWTH thanks the **Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, United Way of Greater Victoria, Victoria Foundation, and BC Housing** for funding this important initiative.

Older Women's Program Update

Stretch: Money Management for Older Women

Since the pandemic, many counselling staff have been unable to meet face-to-face with clients and have flexed in their program delivery. One of our counsellors provided updates on how they adjusted to provide "Stretch", a new, money management and budgeting support program.

"With the current challenges, I adjusted my plans for 'Stretch' with assistance from VWTH's new and secure online platform for video counselling" noted the counsellor. "I emailed out information that participants needed for the program, offered online pre-program and post-program surveys, and, respecting physical distancing, masked up to deliver welcome packages and materials."

With co-facilitators from Vancity, the counsellor offered eight sessions,

covering topics such as basic budgeting, credit, retiring on a limited income, fraud prevention and food security. "Each week we sent out video links, resources and homework activities and then met virtually to discuss the material. Participants were invited to share resources and information and this provided an additional wealth of information for all," shared the counsellor.

Reflecting on the feedback received from participants, the counsellor noted:

"although there was a learning curve to use the digital platform for the program, in the end, the new initiative was very popular and successful.

The feedback from all the participants was positive with some suggestions for changes to the program that we are excited to

incorporate into our next eight-week session this fall."

One program participant shared, "the video and website links were excellent. I watched all of them (multiple times) and my knowledge has really increased! I am going to pass on the information about saving for retirement to my two daughters (21 and 23 years). If they are going to take advantage of compound interest, they need to start saving now!"



Territory Acknowledgement

It is with much respect to the Lkwungen and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples of the WSÁNEĆ, 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.

In the Community

We are grateful to members and organizations in the community that continue to support VWTH through the pandemic. Here we spotlight Soup Sisters, a Canadian enterprise with a mission to bring people together and provide hearty comfort for many, through soup.

Who are Soup Sisters?

Soup Sisters are a non-profit charitable social enterprise dedicated to providing comfort to women, children and youth through the making, sharing and donating of soup. There are Soup Sisters chapters across Canada with an active local group in Victoria.



Providing Comfort During a Pandemic

Before COVID-19, the local Soup Sisters chapter hosted monthly, evening soup-making sessions at

Camosun College, Interurban Campus, in the Culinary Arts Department.

As the local chapter has been unable to gather with soup-making participants due to the pandemic, community partners have been active in helping to facilitate the delivery of fresh, frozen soup to VWTH from Soup Sisters' commercial kitchens located in central locations in western Canada.

We look forward to the day that we can gather to make delicious soup as a group again and share our thanks with Soup Sisters, Soup Sisters' community partners and volunteers. We appreciate your contributions to support our clients and look forward to seeing you again soon.

A Generous Community - Legacy Gifts

Transition House greatly appreciates the thoughtfulness of folks who include our organization in their will and estate planning. If it is helpful, we are happy to provide sample wording for relevant documents and work with you to develop a plan that you can review with your professional advisors.

Have you already arranged to support VWTH? Please let us know so that we can thank you and ensure that we can fulfill your wishes.

Contact our Development Director at susanh@vwth.bc.ca or call **250-592-2927 ext 210**

From a Grateful Client...

Coming to the Shelter gave me an understanding that I wasn't alone in this. I got stronger mentally. My experience in the Shelter was a very positive one. The help I received was amazing and the bond I made with the women, they were like family...Never being in a Shelter before, they [Shelter staff] saved my life and I will always be grateful. Thank you!



Orange Shirt Day

Held on September 30 each year, Orange Shirt Day honours Indigenous children and residential school survivors and aims to raise awareness about the history of residential schools. Learn more at orangeshirtday.org

Turning the Wheel: Expressive Arts Program in Oak Bay – REGISTRATION OPEN!



Creative self-portraits by participants from previous sessions.

Join a small group of 6–8 women over the age of 50, for a free eight-week art program designed to explore experiences and strengths. Participants will use art and storytelling to create a wellness journal, find creative ways to explore and share their rich inner worlds, and perhaps discover new dreams. This program is open to women of all abilities. All supplies are provided.

Session 1: Sept–Oct 2020

Session 2: Nov–Dec 2020

Session 3: Feb–Mar 2021

Duration: Two hours, weekly

Location: Central Oak Bay

For more information and to register, contact our Outreach Counsellor at **250-592-2927 ext 223**. Spaces for this program are limited, please call ASAP. Registration follows an intake meeting.

Note: VWTH will be hosting this program in a safe, outdoor and expansive indoor space with ample fresh air and ventilation and with protocols regarding on-site physical distancing, mask-wearing and hand-washing procedures. All participants will receive their own box of materials, supplies and individually wrapped session snacks for the program.

This program is made possible with generous financial support from **The Tony & Mignon Fenton Trust** and **The Corporation of the District of Oak Bay**. Thank you!



With Our Thanks

Thank you all very much for your kind support at this difficult time. We are truly grateful for your donations, contributions, gifts and grants and all the help you provide to support vulnerable women and their children, including older women, at our Emergency Shelter and through our support programs.

Our thanks to **The Ocean Park Foundation, The All One Fund, Kim Potash and the Barbara and Philip Potash Foundation, The Jawl Foundation, CIBC Wood Gundy, and Carl Newman and Helen Buck** for their generous donations. Thank you to **Marion Evamy**, an artist who has been raising funds for VWTH by auctioning her beautiful artwork. Her painting auctioned in July (pictured, right) was purchased by a local Soup Sister.

Thank you to the **City of Victoria** for supporting VWTH's "Housing and Outreach Program," helping women survivors find safe and stable housing as well as long-term support services

to help rebuild their lives. The "Violence is Preventable" (VIP) youth education program received support from the **Silver Gummy Foundation**, and the VWTH "Healing Through the Arts" initiative received support from the **CRD Arts Commission** for "Multi-disciplinary Arts and Ceramics for Older Women." Thank you also to many individual donors who continue to support these programs and more.



Marion Evamy with her auctioned painting. Photo Credit: Bobb Hamilton

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- Tuesday, September 22**
- 2:00pm–3:00pm**
- Zoom Video Conference**

The Board of Directors of VWTH invite you to attend our AGM. Join us and our guest speaker from the Law Advocacy Program for updates and highlights as we mark another year serving women and children fleeing abusive situations.

RSVP to Laura Reniero ASAP at laurar@vwth.bc.ca or call **250-592-2927 ext 213**



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 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

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