

Winter 2018

Elissa's Story*

For five years I was married to a man who controlled everything I did. He kept me away from my friends, wouldn't let me read the news, and held onto all our money. He often called me horrible names in front of the kids and then denied it, saying I was crazy. I thought about leaving sometimes, but I felt trapped. I didn't think I could support our two young children on my own.

My biggest worry was keeping my kids safe. I saw them becoming anxious, sad and afraid, and I knew something had to change. So one evening I quietly called the Victoria Women's Transition House.

Deciding to leave took several tries, but one day when my husband was away, I left with the kids for the Emergency Shelter. I felt a lot of relief, but I was also scared. Where could I go next? I knew how hard it is to find an affordable apartment, and I was afraid we might end up on the streets. I kept thinking about what my husband had said—if I left him, he would take the kids and wouldn't let me see them again.

I spoke with a counsellor at the Shelter who was very understanding. She said that I had options and introduced me to Clare, a worker from the Transition House **Homelessness Prevention Program**. Clare told me that she would help me apply for a monthly rental subsidy, so I could support the kids on my own.



She also phoned up a landlord, and soon after I was able to go look at an available suite.

Over the next few weeks, the Transition House staff helped me wherever I needed it most. The program assisted with my damage deposit for our new apartment, and Clare helped me to contact a mover for my stuff.

I felt like I had the help I needed to start over.

Best of all, I wasn't afraid that I'd lose my children anymore.

With the help of Transition House, I've taken many small steps to build a new life for my family. My children meet with a children's counsellor,

and I attend a weekly support group. We've met other families who understand what we went through, and we are grateful and excited to move forward with our lives.

The VWTH Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) supports survivors of domestic abuse, who are at risk of homelessness, by providing assistance with damage deposits, rental subsidies, moving and storage, and other barriers to housing. The program also provides advocacy with landlords, referrals to community services and assistance in accessing counselling. For more information about the HPP Program, please call 250-592-2927.

**Elissa's name has been changed for privacy*

Our 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.

How to Reach Us

Crisis and Information Line
250.385.6611

Community Office

Suite 100 3060 Cedar Hill Road
Victoria, BC V8T 3J5

P 250.592.2927

F 250.592.2995

E info@vwth.bc.ca

W transitionhouse.net

Charitable No.

10817 3501 RR0001



Volunteer Spotlight: An Interview with Amanda

Why did you want to be a volunteer with VWTH?

I moved to Victoria to study, and for me, it was about getting some hands-on experience that a textbook couldn't teach me, as well as giving back positively to the community. I had no idea how worthwhile it would be; it's possibly the most valuable learning experience I have ever had, and I am so grateful for the excellent training and opportunity to develop my skills as a Crisis Line volunteer.

What is one of the most important things you've learned as a Crisis Line volunteer?

Before joining VWTH, I had no idea how much relationship violence impacts our community. I know it's sometimes seen as a "hidden issue", but I hadn't considered how difficult this can make it for women to come forward. It takes so much courage to reach out. I feel privileged to see the strength and resilience in women who call the Crisis Line, and I've learned how crucial it is to listen and not make assumptions.

What piece of wisdom would you share from your time with VWTH?

No one makes it through life without somebody else's help. I have grown so much in my time here; it's had a truly valuable impact on my own life,

perspective and relationships. I'm inspired by the stories of those who have accessed services and transformed their lives. One client recently thanked VWTH staff and volunteers for helping her leave an abusive situation. She said that she is filled with hope for the future and looks forward to building a new life, free from fear and violence. She expressed her gratitude to VWTH and intends to let others know that **help is available**.

*The 24-Hour Crisis & Information Line provides **compassionate, non-judgmental** support and **information** for women who are either experiencing domestic abuse, or who have experienced abuse. Concerned family and friends, as well as professionals, can also call for support and information. The Crisis Line is operated by professional staff and highly trained volunteers. In addition to completing VWTH's 1.5-day basic volunteer training course plus 50 volunteer hours, Crisis Line volunteers complete an additional, nine-session training program and a guided practicum to prepare them for becoming a Crisis Line operator.*

Cultural Intelligence & Indigenous Reconciliation

At VWTH our goal is to reduce barriers and to deliver culturally sensitive services for all clients, including indigenous women and children. As an organization that works to create a society free from violence, we strive to foster cultural awareness and to participate in indigenous reconciliation. We make territorial acknowledgements, honoring and expressing gratitude for the land on which we live and work. For indigenous women who access our Shelter, we provide culturally sensitive support and appropriate referrals to services in the community, if requested. As well, we are offering a series of educational workshops to ensure that our employees remain leaders in critical areas related to cultural values, gender inclusivity, and indigenous reconciliation. Thank you to the **United Way of Greater Victoria** for funding this staff training program.



Crisis & Information Line: 250-385-6611



Program Update: Stopping the Violence

Possibly due to heightened public awareness and visibility of issues surrounding domestic violence and abuse, over the last few months, the VWTH **Stopping the Violence** (STV) program has seen a 36% increase in the number of women seeking counselling and support from our STV counsellors, tipping the number of current, active files to over 100.

Many clients now require additional support with complex issues surrounding domestic abuse,

combined with mental health and substance use. In response, the counselling team refers critical cases to other support programs in the community, while continuing to offer VWTH group and individual counselling to women, as well as weekly therapeutic yoga classes. Older women seeking services are referred to the specialized VWTH Older Women's support program, and children are directed to the services of the PEACE / Children

Who Witness Abuse counselling team.

As well as supporting our clients, Victoria Women's Transition House is committed to offering the services of a highly experienced clinical counsellor to provide support and professional consultation to our counselling teams. It is important for our staff to stay healthy and energized so that they can continue to help women survivors of domestic abuse stay safe and supported.

Cherish: A Glamorous Evening of Fashion and Philanthropy

Our sincere thanks to all who participated in and supported **Cherish** at the Fairmont Empress Hotel and Palm Court, **October 4th**.

This sold out fundraising event raised cherished funds for VWTH and Dance Victoria. The kindness and generosity of the community is deeply appreciated. Thank you!



Special thanks to our Lead Sponsor, **Kirsty Thomson** of **Willow Wealth Management of Raymond James** and to our amazing Cherish team: **Kari McLay, Tulipe Noire Clothing; Donna Andersen-White, Hughes Clothing; Dale Olsen, Outlooks for Men; John Carreiro, Carreiro The Studio; Jody Hollis, Beautycounter & Living Hollis Style; Trina Mendria, Artsee Eyewear; Neil Paterson, Oak Bay Optometry; Kirby Banner, Photography; Jake Cofield, Videography; Atmos Events, Chris Tang & Jans Jansom; Tess van Straaten, Host; Jim Beatty, Auctioneer; Jason Kurylo, Scene About Town Runway.**



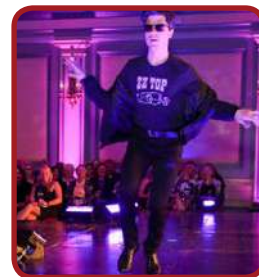
We could not have done this event without the support of our **Community Champions:**

Anonymous; Artsee Eyewear; Beautycounter - Jody Hollis; Bleue Coyote Bar & Grill; BMO Global Asset Management; BMO Saanich & Oak; Bodacious Lifestyles Inc; Canoe Financial; Caposhie; Cardino's Shoes; Cowichan Trading Co; D'AMBROSIO architecture + urbanism; DiCastrì Lidstone, Remax Camosun; Dr. Michael J Murray, Murray Chiropractic Group; Edible Arrangements; Fidelity Investments Canada ULC; First Memorial Funeral Services; Frances Grey; Franklin Templeton Investments; Gilmour Clothing; Good Earth Coffeehouse - Royal Jubilee; Graphic FX Signworks; Horne Coupar Law; MH Stimpson & Associates; NEI Investments; Newport Realty - Glen Myles; Newport Realty - Julie Rust; Niche Travel; Nova Clinical Services; Oak Bay Optometry; Pimco Canada Corp; Remax Camosun - Cloony Frazer; Rep Lab Communications; Robert W. Cameron Law Corporation;



Rod & Gun Bar & Grill - Parksville; Royal LePage - Shauna Jones; Sandra Hudson Communications; Smart Dolphins IT Solutions; Sotheby's International Realty Canada - Andy Stephenson; Style Stick; Sweet Dreams Boutique; Tulipe Noire Clothing; Vessel Liquor; Zebra Design & Interiors Group Inc.

Thank you to the **Fairmont Empress Hotel**, our talented **dancers/models, volunteers, guests**, and the many **donors to our Live and Silent Auctions and Mystery Envelopes.**



Thank You!



Gift Cards

Your donation of a grocery or pharmacy gift card is greatly appreciated!



This season, when you are out grocery shopping or holiday gift buying, please consider adding a gift card to your list as a gift for a Transition House client to purchase groceries, fresh produce, and other essentials.

Gift cards from Fairway Market, Walmart, Thrifty Foods, Save-On-Foods, Shoppers Drug Mart, London Drugs, or other groceries and pharmacies, in increments of \$25 and \$50, are most practical and can be dropped off during regular office hours or mailed to our Community Office, #100-3060 Cedar Hill Road, Victoria, BC V8T 3J5. Please include your name, return address, and value of the gift card so we can send you a note of appreciation.

Thank you.

Why We Give Jane and Harlow Hollis

I first came to know of Transition House in the early 1980s, when I heard about the good work being done by the organization. As a young mom myself at the time, the stories of the abused women resonated with me. I was deeply sympathetic to the plight of the women with young children, and was inspired by their bravery, because it is brave to leave a home, to walk away with nothing but the clothes on their backs to try to make a better, safer life for themselves and their children. I always admired that – how these women gathered their courage, and how Transition House helped them find their way in a world without domestic violence.



When we help a woman stand up for herself peacefully and help her to help her family, the community betters as a whole and future generations gain the opportunity to develop a positive relationship with the world. I have been a lifetime financial supporter because of my belief in this program, and I know that our donations go directly to providing better outcomes for local women who both need and deserve it.

-Jane Hollis



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

Card No: _____ Expiry: _____/_____

Cardholder Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

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
SOCIETY

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