

Fall 2019

*Sarah's Story**

The following story describes a teenage girl's experience in the Violence is Preventable program, offered through Victoria Women's Transition House. Counsellors from the VIP program provide engaging workshops to students in Greater Victoria, teaching young people about dating violence, healthy relationships, emotional regulation and healthy communication and boundaries. Students also learn about the different forms of abuse and how to stay safe and access help when needed.

*Last Spring, two counsellors from the Transition House visited my classroom and gave a workshop called **Violence is Preventable**. At first, I didn't think I needed to learn about this, but it turns out I'm pretty glad they came.*

In the workshop, we talked about what makes a relationship healthy and what can make a relationship hurtful. I'd never really had this conversation before, and I thought it would just be obvious. But actually, relationships aren't always simple or respectful.

*It was interesting to learn about the warning signs of when a relationship starts to get unhealthy or even abusive. **I just thought of abuse as physical, but the counsellors said it could also be sexual, emotional and even include bullying and what happens online.***



*I thought it was pretty cool that the guys in my class seemed really interested in this topic too, like it wasn't just something that girls are supposed to worry about. Sometimes the way people talk about abusive behavior makes me feel like it's only the girl's responsibility to leave if things get bad, and that it's her fault for staying. **But the counsellors told us that abusive behavior is always the choice of the person being abusive, and it's never the victim's fault.***

During the workshop I learned why some women stay in abusive relationships. When my parents were together, my mom would forgive my dad for the stuff he did and it made me really angry.

Even my grades started to go down because I was so upset.** I remembered that my mom didn't have many friends left when she was still with my dad, because he would get jealous when she went out. It would have been hard to be isolated like that, and she was probably pretty worried about how she could support us if she left. **Learning about that stuff made me feel closer to my mom because I think I understand her a little bit better now, and realize she was probably doing her best.

Sometimes I've put up with disrespectful behavior in my relationships, because that's what I saw at home and I thought it was

*normal. But now I really feel like I don't want to do that anymore, **because I have a right to a caring and healthy relationship.** I thought that there was something wrong with me because I used to blame myself for what happened between my parents, but it had nothing to do with me.*

At the end of the workshop one of the counsellors talked about how people who have gone through these things are really resilient, which helped me think of myself in a different way. He also mentioned that there is free counselling for young people who witness abuse, and that made me feel a lot better just knowing there are people who I can talk to. There's also a special girls group called Shine where I can get support and meet other girls like me.

For information on free VIP youth workshops, Shine Girls Group, and all of our counselling programs for children and youth, call us at **250-592-2927** or consult **www.transitionhouse.net**.

**Name has been changed for confidentiality*

Our Mission

Victoria Women's Transition House Society 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.



Preventing the Cycle of Violence

VWTH believes in the power of prevention and ending the cycle of violence and abuse against women and children. The **Violence is Preventable (VIP) Program** aims to do just that.

Given that boys who witness violence in the home are more likely to mirror those behaviors later in life, and girls are more likely to accept abusive situations, the VIP Program is crucial in preventing abusive behaviors, through education and awareness.

Kevin is one of our VIP counsellors and has noticed that the demand for VIP is rapidly increasing, perhaps in part due to increased awareness in the community. **He believes that the workshops offer skills and knowledge that everyone should have, but most of us were never taught.** "Often kids think the violence they observe at home is just normal" he said. Thankfully, counsellors like Kevin engage youth about how to foster healthy relationships and how to avoid unhealthy and hurtful ones. Even if a child isn't living in a home where domestic abuse is occurring, **learning how to navigate the complexity of relationships in a healthy and respectful way, is a skill that everyone benefits from.**



These free 90-minute VIP workshops are successful because they are more of a dialogue than a monologue, and feature interactive and engaging content. Kevin says the teachers are often surprised at how attentive their students are during the discussions, and at their keen participation in activities.

Abuse is far more pervasive than we imagine, yet we often don't realize it because it's rarely talked about.

According to statistics, three to five students in every classroom have witnessed their mother being assaulted.

School is a safe place where students can observe positive relationship building and alternative behavior that is non-violent. "Problems arise when there is no communication" says Kevin, "and there is rarely conversation in schools, outside of VIP, about intimate partner violence and abuse."

In addition to engaging content and activities, the VIP program consistently focuses on three core messages for participants:

- **It's never my fault** if adults are fighting
- **Don't get in the middle** of a confrontation
- **I am not alone**

VIP counsellors ask students to provide anonymous feedback after the

workshops, which reveal the profound impact of the program. Many students comment on what they learned about abuse and its causes, and how they didn't realize all the different types of abuse that exist. Other students share their changed perspectives, including one participant who wrote, **'everyone has the right to feel safe'**.

When it comes to ending the cycle of abuse, early education and prevention are key, and Victoria Women's Transition House is here to help.

- **Exposure to violence** can negatively affect peer relations and academic achievement
- Understanding the effects of children's exposure to violence can help adults to **more effectively support students**
- Schools help to **develop the values, norms and attitudes** that children and youth learn
- **Early education and intervention programs can have a critical impact on building healthy relationships**



100+ Women Who Care Victoria

Are you a member of 100+ Women Who Care Victoria? Are you willing to meet with a Victoria Women's Transition House children's counsellor to learn about our Violence is Preventable (VIP) program and the positive impacts these innovative, interactive workshops for youth have on community? VWTH is looking for a 100+ Woman Victoria member to nominate our organization and our domestic abuse awareness program,

Violence is Preventable, for a 100+ Women Who Care Victoria donation. This would give Transition House the opportunity to take the VIP program into more than 35 Victoria-area classrooms, impacting more than 1000 students from kindergarten through high school as well as hundreds of teachers, educators, school counsellors and school administrators. **Can you help?**

For more information contact Susan at 250-592-2927 ext 210 or susanh@vwth.bc.ca. Thank you!





Older Women's Program Updates

Identify Formation Through Doll Creativity

VWTH is pleased to offer a ten-session doll-making program for 8 to 10 older women. This unique expressive art program allows participants to process past relationships and to strengthen social identities. Mixed media art and assorted craft supplies will be provided to each woman as well as a 12-inch wire "Bendi" doll. Women will also receive a journal to record



their thoughts as they work through the process of doll creation and the accompanying feelings of loss and renewal. The program will be facilitated by a VWTH older women's counsellor who is also a registered art therapist.

Thank you to **The CRD Arts Commission** and **individual donors** for funding and support of this program.

Turning the Page: Health and Wellness in Oak Bay – REGISTRATION OPEN!

Join a small group of 10 women over the age of 50, for a free eight-week arts program designed for women to explore their 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.

Next sessions are:

- September to October 2019
- November to December 2019
- February to March 2020

Sessions occur on Wednesdays from 1-3pm. For more info and to register, contact our Outreach Counsellor at 250-592-2927 ext 223.

The Corporation of Oak Bay granted VWTH funding for the "Health and Wellness Project for Older Women", also funded by **The Tony & Mignon Fenton Trust**.



It's the 20th Year of Summer Camp!

Over the past twenty years, the VWTH Summer Camp has served approximately 350 children and has grown from one camp a year to two. In addition, a 5-day Spring Camp is now being provided. Both camps, which are run by the PEACE/Children Who Witness Abuse Program, are for children and youth who have witnessed intimate partner violence and abuse at home. The camps have a huge impact on kids, who are given the opportunity to try fun activities they have never done before such as rock climbing and zip lining.

Participants are surrounded by emotional support and learn a multitude of skills to break the intergenerational cycle of abuse. The children form bonds very quickly, gain confidence and self-esteem, and have many positive social experiences. They learn that they are not alone, and that they have many strengths and skills that can be applied to their lives outside of camp.

Our thanks to the **Norgard Foundation, Harbourside Rotary, CFAX Santas Anonymous, Peninsula Coop,** and the **Viveka Foundation Fund through the Victoria Foundation** for supporting the Summer 2019 and Spring Break 2020 children's camps.



Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, September 24 | 2:00 - 4:00pm
Carlton House, 2080 Oak Bay Avenue
The Board of Directors of Victoria Women's Transition House invite you to attend our Annual General Meeting. Enjoy tea and freshly baked goodies,

a guest speaker, and more as we mark another year serving women and children fleeing abusive situations.

To RSVP contact Laura at **laurar@vwth.bc.ca** or call **250.592.2927 ext. 213**

Territory Acknowledgement

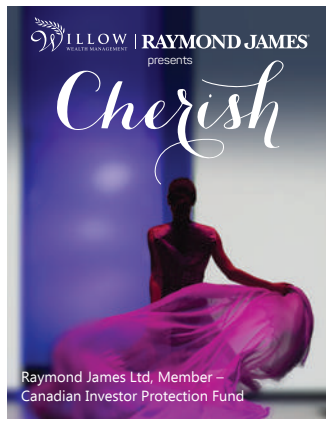
It is with much respect to the Lkwungen and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples of the WSÁNEĆ, Esquimalt, and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories the Victoria Women's Transition House Society is located, that we make this acknowledgment with the expressed shared hope to live in communities free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

Upcoming:

Support Victoria Women's Transition House and our charity partner, Dance Victoria, and purchase tickets to **Cherish: A Glamorous Evening of Fashion & Philanthropy**

Thursday, October 24, 2019 at Crystal Garden. Doors at 6:00pm, Fashion Show at 7:30pm

Presented by Kirsty Thomson of Willow Wealth Management of Raymond James.



Cherish includes a vibrant parade of men's and women's fashions, modelled by sixteen Victoria-based dancers, who will sweep down the giant runway, spotlighting a variety of dance genres – ballet, ballroom, contemporary, tap, flamenco, salsa, hip hop, etc. The evening also features wine, canapés, live and silent auctions, and "mystery balloons".

Fashions: Tulipe Noire Clothing, Outlooks for Men, Hughes Clothing
Hair: Carreiro The Studio

Make-up: Beautycounter & Living Hollis Style

Eyewear: Oak Bay Optometry Clinic & Artsee Eyewear-Oak Bay Village

Music: DJ Mike Devlin | Host: Tess van Straaten

Tickets: \$85 plus service fees

Call 250-386-6121 or visit <https://bit.ly/2V0MEc6>

For information on our Cherish Community Champions donor program, please contact Susan K.E. Howard, 250-592-2927 ext 210 or susanh@vwth.bc.ca

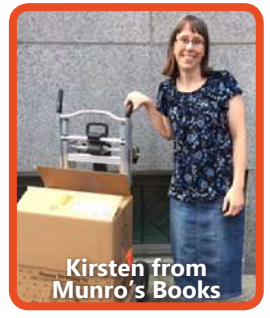
Thank You!

Thank you to the **City of Victoria** for support of the VWTH Housing and Outreach Program, helping women survivors of intimate partner violence and abuse find safe and stable housing as well as long-term support services to help rebuild their lives.

Thank you to **Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation** for supporting "Shine": Girls Group, the **TLC Fund for Kids** for supporting Boys Group and **The Charlton L. Smith Charitable Foundation** for supporting Helping Children Heal, an in-shelter parenting program.

The Women's Drop-In Support Group, a vital and on-going, weekly support group for women leaving the Shelter or awaiting one-on-one counselling from our community office is supported by **First West Foundation** as well as **RBC Foundation** and the **RBC Royal Bank, Oak Bay Branch**.

Thank you to **Munro's Books** for the book donations and **The Body Shop** and its customers for the bath and beauty products!



Kirsten from Munro's Books



The Body Shop

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 monthly 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



HOW TO REACH US:

#100 3060 Cedar Hill Road
Victoria BC V8T 3J5

P 250-592-2927

E info@vwth.bc.ca

Charitable No.
10817 3501 RR0001

transitionhouse.net

Production of this newsletter was generously discounted by:

