



Meet Nicki

RESPECT STARTS AT THE FRONT DOOR



When someone calls the VWTH Community Office the first voice they will hear is our receptionist, most often Nicki. Anyone who has visited will remember her welcoming and friendly smile. As the starting point for many people's interactions with VWTH, Nicki provides assurance, information and connection for clients, supporters and staff.

How long have you been working at VWTH?

I've been here for 16 years. I started as a temporary helper for the Holiday Hamper Program, but before I knew it, I was full time in my current role as Office Assistant.

How did you feel about the organization when you started?

I always felt connected to the organization and the work we do. For me it was just like coming home to work here.

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.

What's changed over 16 years?

I feel that there's more and more awareness about VWTH – when people call for information, they reference that their neighbour suggested they call, or their friend. In my life, over the years, I've asked many women if they're okay, if they need someone to talk to, and have shared the VWTH contact information

The receptionist role is a difficult one that often requires multi-tasking, how do you make sure that everyone who comes through our door (or calls us) knows that VWTH values them and their experiences?

It's very important for donors to know VWTH appreciates their support and I have built a relationship with many of them. At the same time, I want clients to know they are welcome and we have resources to assist them. I will listen and respect their confidentiality and then make sure they are connected with the information they need to make decisions about their next steps

As our ambassador we value Nicki's professionalism and the safe space and assurance that she provides to so many people each day. We're lucky to have her in the role, though she would say that she's the lucky one: **"I love what I do!"**



Creative Opportunity: Supportive Process

Our Wednesday Drop-In Support Group is available for community members affected by intimate partner violence, even if they are not a current VWTH client. Approximately ten women attend each week to learn from a psycho-educational presentation on diverse topics such as self-care, gaslighting, healing, and then to check in and share with other participants. Through the group, attendees get a sense of connection and the benefit of hearing from other survivors, all at different stages in their journeys.

Recently, the Wednesday group enjoyed a creative opportunity thanks to a guest presenter from the **Maritime Museum**. She brought locally sourced sea glass with her, and the group used the sea glass to create pendants and earrings. While they created together, they learned about the material and heard stories of its lore.

For the participants this was a beautiful opportunity to have some fun, and spend time on a light-hearted activity.

(Continued inside)

Back to School for the PEACE Team

As we reach the end of the summer break, our VWTH children's team is reflecting on another successful session of summer camps, and thinking about the upcoming school year, with its opportunities for presentations and education.

Our PEACE Counsellors (PEACE stands for Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment), work year-round with youth who have witnessed intimate partner violence and abuse at home, through group and individual counselling sessions. In the spring and summer school breaks staff run a camp program for those youth, with trauma-informed, psycho-educational group time as well as opportunities for fun, skill-building activities.

During the school year the PEACE team also facilitates the Violence is Preventable (VIP) program. This public education and awareness program helps to break the cycle of violence through age-appropriate presentations at elementary, middle and high schools. These interactive workshops each have a different focus depending on the age of student.

PEACE Counsellor Haylee is especially looking forward to interactions with the elementary school students next year. "The high school presentations are great, and we love to see how engaged the students are, but I think at the elementary level those moments are just as important." Haylee has the



support of her 'colleague' Murphy the puppet for these presentations: "Murphy is always a big hit with the younger students!" The key message is about safety. Kids are encouraged to think about what safety looks like at home, and to know they are not responsible for behaviours they witness in others. It's also an opportunity for children to identify that some of the things happening in their lives are not okay, and that it is safe to talk about this with the counsellor or teacher.

For older youth and teens, our 75-minute, VIP workshops cover topics such as dating violence, healthy communication, consent and accountability, emotional regulation,

boundaries and more. The information shared, and the conversations sparked from the presentations, help youth to recognize behaviours in themselves and others that may indicate warning signs or patterns of abusive behaviour.

By engaging youth in these conversations, the workshops aim to empower participants to become advocates within their peer groups and know what to do if they encounter abusive behaviour. Haylee shares: "When we find someone who gets fired up by the topic it's exciting to us. We're giving them language to talk about what they're thinking – some of them want to show up and do more and that's why we've developed the idea of the **Youth Engagement Project**." This new group will support students interested in social justice and gender equity issues to connect with their peers and learn more, through a year-long project that will include workshops and monthly check-ins facilitated by the PEACE team.

The popular VIP program continues to evolve and grow, reaching new audiences each year, with content that addresses current issues and concerns.

The VWTH Violence is Preventable program is supported by **Viveka Foundation Fund** through the **Victoria Foundation, West Shore Community Policing Advisory Committee**, the **Silver Gummy Foundation**, **BC Society of Transition Houses** and individual donors.

(Creative Opportunity: Supportive Process contd.)

VWTH support worker Mary explains: "in contrast to some of our heavier presentations, opportunities like this allow our clients to chat together and build community. They also have something to take away with them – at no cost – to remind them that life can include lighter times."

Find out more about participating in our drop-in support groups, contact outreachsupportworker@vwth.bc.ca



Volunteer With Us

We rely on the support of volunteers in many areas of our organization. If you've been considering volunteering with us, now is a great time to register your interest as we have volunteer training coming up in the fall. Visit our website and read the information on the **get involved/volunteer program** page – if you think you'd be a good fit for us please complete the application form.

Donor Profile – Samantha Dickie

Samantha Dickie is a Victoria-based artist who specializes in ceramic sculpture and installations. Her award-winning work has been exhibited across Canada, most recently at the Fifty Fifty Gallery in Victoria. Samantha is also a well-known philanthropist, supporting non-profits and projects through her **Viveka Foundation Fund** held at the Victoria Foundation. For the past three years Samantha has supported Victoria Women's Transition House with a generous donation.

Q. There is so much need in Victoria, why have you made the decision to donate to VWTH again this year?

VWTH is one of the most critical organizations in Victoria. The need for community services that support access to safe shelter, housing, food security, and physical/emotional wellbeing are in endless demand, even more so after COVID. After sitting on non-profit boards, my primary mandate in philanthropy is to support these essential organizations by taking some pressure off annual fundraising for initiatives that fall outside of core operations and governmental funding streams. Individual donor funding committed on an ongoing basis that doesn't require annual grant requests and reports is a way to support important programming that can be relied upon year after year.

Q. You have a degree in Gender Studies and Indigenous Studies, how has that education shaped your thinking about the support that women and marginalized people need?

Gender and Indigenous Studies disseminate the architecture of how the colonial, capitalist system is built with interlocking identities of inequity and oppression. The fabric of discrimination, omission and violence facing marginalized people is systemically structured, consciously created, and unconsciously upheld. Within this unequal system, specific challenges to accessing basic rights to safety, security, nourishment, opportunity, education, independence,



and resources require unending support, much of which is reliant upon non-profit organizations such as VWTH. These organizations never have adequate funding and can always use more support.

Q. Your generous donation is split between two different VWTH programs (Violence is Preventable and Family Law Advocacy). What impresses you about those programs?

Access to education and legal resources are parallel requirements within the umbrella of support required to shift the paradigm of domestic violence. The court system and structure of family law is incredibly intimidating and can be confusing for most of us, let alone the women who are facing multiple barriers to access. Having free and direct access to legal information, resources and support, delivered with respect from law experts who can address the specifics of each individual situation is critical for women to be able to escape coercion and violence towards self-advocacy, safety and independence. Simultaneously, working with kids to understand what they witness and how they feel is a key aspect to interrupting the cycle of abuse. I am incredibly impressed by the reach that the VIP program has across the school boards in Victoria.

Thank you Samantha for your continued, thoughtful support.

Join us at our 2023 AGM

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 impacted by intimate partner violence and abuse.

Date: Tuesday, September 26

Time: 10am-12noon

Location: In person at the Cedar Hill Golf Course Clubhouse, 1400 Derby Road and via Zoom (link will be sent with RSVP)

Special Guest: Susan Robinson, Victim Service Worker, Regional Domestic Violence Unit speaking on *Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence*

If you would like to join us at our AGM, please RSVP to Laura Reniero at laurar@vwth.bc.ca

Light refreshments will be served. Lots of free parking available.

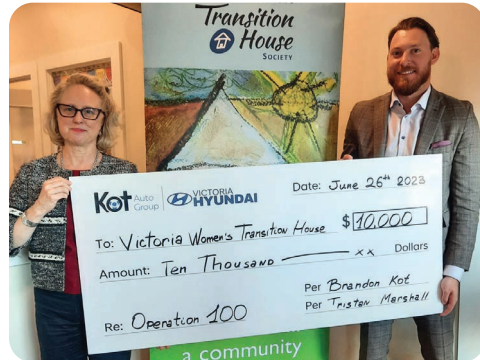
Community Education

Did You Know? We have a **Community Education Co-Ordinator** who would love to connect with your community group, service club, business or institution. Learn about the services that VWTH provides and ways that you can get involved. Maya can arrange a presentation tailored specifically to your area of interest, and present to you in person, or via zoom.

Contact mayas@vwth.bc.ca

With Our Thanks

Victoria Women's Transition House thanks **The RBC Foundation** and the **A & S Murphy Family Fund** for their generous contributions. Our grateful thanks also to the **Victoria Real Estate Board**, **Royal Lepage Coast Capital Realty** and **Kot Auto Group – Victoria Hyundai**. **Kot Auto Group** (pictured below) raised generous donations for VWTH through a portion of all car sales in May – thank you!



Canada Day pancake breakfast; and to residents of **Tapestry at Victoria Harbour** for their donation collected from residents and staff at an International Women's Day event.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who donated gifts-in-kind including staff and customers at the **Body Shop** stores (pictured above) at Hillside and Mayfair Shopping Centres, the **LUSH** and **Saje** stores at Mayfair Shopping Centre; **Brooks Running Shoes** for shoes and sports bras for our 50+ Walking Group; the **Saheli Foundation** and **individual donors** for grocery store gift cards for our clients; generous contributions of hygiene products, diapers and baby bottles and cozy handmade quilts were also gratefully received.

We are deeply grateful to the Estate of **Adaline Cotton**, **Barbara Simpson** and **Margaret Sylvester** for their generous bequests.

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

Thank you to the **Potash Family Fund** for supporting PEACE Children's Camps and the Families in Shelter project and to the **Norgaard Foundation**, **Rotary Club of Victoria – Harbourside**, **Peninsula Co-op** and the **TLC Fund for Kids** for their support of the Camps Program. Our thanks also to **Island Health** for continuing support of our 50+ Community Wellness programs.

Thanks to **Frances Hope** who donated proceeds raised at her album release party; to the **Cedar Hill Middle School Leadership Club** and **Claremont Secondary School** for student-led fundraisers; to **Huntingdon Manor Hotel** for donations collected at the

Legacy Giving

Make your values your legacy by including VWTH in your estate planning. Join the VWTH Legacy Circle. We can provide sample wording for relevant documents and work with you to develop a plan that you can review with your professional advisors. Contact Susan Howard, Development and Communications Director, at 250.592.2927 ext. 210 or susanh@vwth.bc.ca for more information.

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.

Your Support Provides Strength

Make your donation today!

- Call **250.592.2927** and pay by credit card.
- Mail your cheque, payable to '**Victoria Women's Transition House**', to **Suite 100–3060 Cedar Hill Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 3J5**
- Pay online through our website: **transitionhouse.net**



VICTORIA WOMEN'S
Transition
 *House*
SOCIETY

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