



Celebrating 40 Years at VWTH: Meet Parm Kroad

Parm Kroad is the Deputy Director at Victoria Women’s Transition House (VWTH) and has been an integral staff member since 1981. Parm has worked in various counselling, program-lead and leadership positions over the decades and continues to contribute a multitude of experience, skills and expertise—all attributes that have successfully helped VWTH to provide support services for women and children escaping abusive situations.

“In all my years of being here, Transition House has continually expanded, improved and become more proactive in tackling abuse against women and children. We have changed how people see intimate partner violence and

abuse and have seen so much growth and acceptance of these important issues,” shared Parm.

To acknowledge 40 years of service, Parm was recently presented an Appreciation Award by the board of directors.

Reflecting on what she enjoys most about working at VWTH, Parm shared her thoughts. “I have always been a feminist and imagined myself working as an agent for women. I don’t get tired of my work—it has always felt purposeful. And then there are the people I have worked with through



the years. There has been amazing support from colleagues—all committed to the cause, not for material gain, but because they are passionate and dedicated to the feminist movement. We have overcome many challenges and shared much success and joy.”

Thank you, Parm, for your energetic commitment to VWTH and the community.

No doubt, your enthusiasm will continue to carry us through the years with more success and growth in the services and programs we provide.

Thank You VWTH Volunteers!

April 24–30, 2022 is **National Volunteer Week**. This year’s theme, Empathy in Action, embodies the work of 75+ dedicated VWTH volunteers.

From staffing our 24-hour Crisis Line and cooking meals for Shelter residents; to supporting new clients in their move to our Transitional Housing (Helper Movers project); picking up donations; hosting information tables at events and more, VWTH volunteers are a

tremendous help in our work supporting women and children impacted by intimate partner violence and abuse.

“Victoria Women’s Transition House volunteers are hands down the best. They continue to play an essential role and contribute to the success of the organization. Their kind hearts, supportive nature and unwavering commitment make me proud,” shared Christy, VWTH’s volunteer

coordinator. To celebrate Volunteer Week, Transition House is planning to recognize volunteers and share our appreciation with some surprises and a special celebratory treat at the Shelter.

Thank you, volunteers, for all that you do. Visit transitionhouse.net/get-involved/become-a-volunteer to learn more about our Volunteer Program.



Volunteer Reflection

I love volunteering for the VWTH because I know I am contributing to empowering women and families in my community when they are potentially at their lowest point—and that every safe space, good meal and emotional support may help to break a cycle [of abuse]. It doesn’t matter the size of the job—what matters is that collectively, we are lifting people up when they need it most. – Rachel, VWTH Volunteer

High-Risk Cases in Intimate Partner Violence: Regional Domestic Violence Unit

The first time Charlie pinned me against the wall and choked me, I thought I was going to die. I felt so alone. After the incident, Charlie told me that if I ever left, they would kill me. I did not doubt that staying would have most certainly ended that way. I never thought Charlie could hurt me, but I guess the signs** had been there all along.*

The Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common form of gender-based violence and is used for power and control. IPV and abuse affect people every day regardless of age, gender identity, race, ethnicity or culture, religion or socio-economic background. A CBC News investigation showed that between 2014–19, 497 victims of intimate partner homicide were reported and—similar to intimate partner violence in general—approximately 80% (400 victims) were women. More worrying perhaps is the gross underreporting of IPV. 80% of victims who experience spousal violence do not report it to the police. Common reasons for this include: belief that abuse is a private or personal matter; a perception that it is not important enough to report; fear that nothing can be done and that the violence will escalate; living arrangements; financial dependence; reluctance or

inability to seek out police; and shared children (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Labelled the shadow pandemic, there has been an increase in IPV and abuse throughout COVID-19, highlighted by a devastating rise in more violent forms of abuse.

Regional Domestic Violence Unit

The Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) was established in 2007 after a horrific domestic homicide-suicide case in Oak Bay, where three generations of a family were killed in a terrible tragedy. As a result of a coroner's inquest following the incident, fourteen recommendations were made which included establishing a cross-jurisdictional domestic violence unit to improve communication and collaboration among law enforcement agencies across the region.

The Unit consists of a collaborative team of police, community partners, including VWTH, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Community Corrections. It provides intensive support services where high-risk warning signs are present, or if there is an elevated risk of serious injury or death to the survivor or their children. Specific to each high-risk survivor's needs, supports include risk assessment, offender management and safety planning.



Between 2020–21, the RDVU identified 73 highest-risk cases for intervention. **“When community partners make referrals to the RDVU, the presence of certain high-risk factors, particularly coercive control and strangulation, result in the Unit taking on the file for intervention, monitoring and support,”** explains Sue Robinson, who is part of VWTH's RDVU Victims Services team. “Although specialized units such as ours will never know how many serious injuries or intimate partner homicides we have prevented, it is certainly our hope that when warning signs are present, swift intervention for any woman who needs it, will help reduce the risk.”

Support is always available. Call our Crisis Line at **250.385.6611**. In an emergency, call **911**.

**Name has been changed for confidentiality*

***See next page for warning signs present in high-risk cases where there is an elevated risk of serious injury or death*

Healing Through the Arts

Between October–December 2021, visual artist Marie Metaphoe Specht led an eight-week support project titled *Healing Through the Arts: Creativity and Resilience Through COVID-19*. The expressive arts-based project offered mixed media classes for survivors of intimate partner violence further isolated due to the pandemic and focused on multidisciplinary visual arts, including art journaling, poetry and creative writing. The following montage showcases beautiful artwork created by participants during the winter 2021 program.





Building Partnerships to Improve Community Support

The **Regional Domestic Violence Unit** demonstrates the importance and effectiveness of organizations working together to increase education, information-sharing and partnerships that empower victims, encourage offender accountability and help create a society free from intimate partner violence and abuse. To better understand IPV as it relates to women and families of all backgrounds, and to develop our capacity to better support minority populations, including newcomers to Canada, VWTH has joined the **Community Partnership Network (CPN)**. Created by the **Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)**, CPN is a group of 300+ local organizations and businesses committed to building diverse, welcoming and inclusive communities.

Last November, in collaboration with Victoria Women's Transition House and the RDVU, the ICA presented a Zoominar (an interactive, online web presentation through Zoom video conference) and panel discussion called *Safeguarding Diverse Newcomer Women*. Special guest speaker Kamal Dhillon, a counsellor, anti-violence motivational speaker and advocate and author of *Black and Blue Sari* and *I AM KAMAL, Survivor to Thriver!*, told her personal story of living through intimate partner violence and rebuilding her life after



escaping an extremely abusive relationship. "I write about my struggles and obstacles knowing my story could give others hope, maybe even save someone's life," explained Dhillon.

The Zoominar provided a space for panellists and attendees to share knowledge, personal experiences, community resources and expertise to better support immigrant women who experience IPV and abuse, in a culturally sensitive manner.

We look forward to continuing to work with the CPN to recognize and address barriers, develop inclusive supports and improve access for women and children who experience all forms of abuse. For more information about the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, visit icavictoria.org



Healing Through the Arts inspires participants to develop their skills; relieve isolation and engage with others in shared interests and experiences; participate in community-based activities; develop time for safe, quiet reflection and build resilience as they heal from abuse. A second session, which focused on print-making, was held January–March, 2022.

We are grateful to the **CRD Arts Commission** and **individual donors** for funding this program. *Artwork shared with permission.*

The Warning Signs of High-Risk IPV

Intimate partner violence and abuse refers to multiple forms of harm, including verbal, emotional, physical, sexual, financial and spiritual, and is caused by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.

Warning signs are important predictors in identifying IPV and abuse. In high-risk cases where there is an elevated risk of serious injury or death to the survivor and/or their children, identifying the presence of one or more of the following warning signs can be live-saving:

- **A recent or pending separation.** This is the most dangerous time for a victim and is the most common risk factor present in cases of intimate partner homicide
- **Previously reported violence or harassment** by the victim to police
- **A pattern of coercive or controlling behaviour by the abuser:** belittlement, humiliation, gaslighting*, stalking or spying, repeated phone calls and texts, controlling daily activities or finances, isolation from friends or family
- **Threat(s) to harm or kill** the abused, a loved one or pet
- **A history of violent abuse** including threats with a weapon, choking or strangulation

Call our 24-hour Crisis & Information Line at **250.385.6611** for compassionate, non-judgemental support and community resources. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call **911**.

Source: *Spotting the Signs*. Available: https://endingviolence.org/files/uploads/Spot_the_Signs_0.pdf

*Gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse that causes a person to question their feelings, instincts, memories and sanity. A common tactic used to gain power and control in a relationship.

Karlee and the 10th Annual Victoria Goddess Run



Karlee Grant is the senior program manager and Victoria Women's Transition House's Charity Champion for the **10th Annual Victoria Goddess Run** on June 4, 2022, in Langford.

Hi everyone, my name is Karlee and I am participating in the June Victoria Goddess Run. I am excited to be this year's Charity Champion for VWTH. Having joined the team at VWTH a year ago as the senior program manager, I have witnessed the amazing services this organization offers to the community and observed firsthand the positive impact the Shelter, transitional

housing and community programs have on women and children in our community.

Over the past two years, the pandemic has brought on an unprecedented need for the services of VWTH. It is estimated that the pandemic has increased domestic violence by 25–33% globally. The need for support has increased for women and children that are impacted by intimate partner violence. This is why I have chosen to raise funds for an organization that provides a lifeline to many.

All donations made through my fundraising page with Victoria Goddess Run in 2022 will be directed to VWTH's Shelters, programs and services that support women and children impacted by intimate partner violence and abuse. Thank you for your support!

Source: Boserup et al. (2020). Alarming trends in US domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The American journal of emergency medicine*

Thank you so much, Karlee, for your enthusiasm and determination! Support Karlee's fundraising journey by donating at tinyurl.com/47jv3yye

Wills and Bequests

Many folks believe that they can't support both their loved ones and their chosen cause in their Will. **The truth is, just a small percentage of your estate left to charity can have a big impact, while still leaving the majority for loved ones. Choosing to support a non-profit like Victoria Women's Transition House can also reduce and, in some cases, eliminate the taxes to be paid.** You don't need to be wealthy to make a gift to charity in your Will.

All estate gifts, no matter the size, are deeply valued and appreciated.

We invite you to consider leaving a charitable gift in your Will to VWTH and help us help vulnerable women and children leaving violence and abuse. For more information, please contact Susan Howard, Development and Communications Director, at susanh@vwth.bc.ca or **250.592.2927 ext. 210**.



WILL POWER™ VWTH 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. Visit VWTH's Will Power information page at willpower.ca/charities/victoria-womens-transition-house for more details and to see the potential impact of your Gift using the no-obligation Legacy Calculator.

Goddess Run

PRESENTED BY
CATHY NOEL  DFH

The **Victoria Goddess Run** is a community of women and girls who come together to celebrate their stories, goals and challenges. More than a run, it is an opportunity to connect and inspire each other.

VWTH is honoured to be one of three 2022 charities of choice. You can register for the 5KM or 10KM run as an individual or as part of a team. Participants can add a tax-deductible donation to their registration, create a fundraising page and get friends and family involved to raise funds for their charity of choice. Learn more and register at goddessrun.ca

Helper Movers

Helper Movers is a new volunteer project created to support VWTH clients in need of assistance moving their personal household items into VWTH's Third Stage Transition Housing or to other safe spaces. This dedicated group of volunteers offers friendly, confidential assistance to help clients with their household moving needs. The volunteers receive VWTH educational sessions and volunteer training, with moving details coordinated through a VWTH staff member.

Thanks to Helper Movers, clients can move their belongings, with minimal stress, into a new safe space with support from a caring group of community volunteers.

Community Spotlight: Lisa Woo and Discovery Toys

The Easter Basket Campaign started in 2011 with **Lisa Woo**, a play advisor with **Discovery Toys**. Every year since, campaign organizers have assembled individual, age-appropriate Easter gift baskets for children and delivered these to local charities like VWTH ahead of the Easter period. Baskets include a high-quality Discovery Toys game, toy and/or book, sweet and salty treats, dental hygiene products and other donated items. We connected with Lisa to ask some questions.



Tell us a little about yourself and Discovery Toys

As a new mother 20 years ago, I decided to join the Discovery Toys team and try out a home business focused entirely on best choices for infant development and healthy relationships with children through play. My passion for helping children and families find connection through unplugged play and offering quality options for the

most formative years remains my motivation in being committed to Discovery Toys.

What started the Easter Basket Campaign?

During the 2010 Christmas period, I noticed many wonderful charity projects. While Easter is another Holiday that parents try to make special for children, there did not seem to be initiatives that organized gifts for children and families in need during this time.

That following January, I hosted a training session with my teammates across the province and proposed the Easter Basket Campaign. Together, we pledged to see how many kids in need of support we could reach in our respective cities before Easter that year. Since then, the Campaign has scaled to hundreds of cities across North America.

What inspires you to support VWTH and other local charities?

In searching for organizations to support, VWTH was one of my first phone calls. It broke my heart to think about moms who have to escape danger to protect themselves and their children, often leaving with nothing. I am motivated to keep the Easter Basket program going year after year to help show women and children facing difficult situations that the community cares and that there is hope for the future.

As a toy and book distributor, I donate all of my profits to increase the value of each gift basket. But without the



support of friends and sponsorships from other community members, I couldn't help as many children as I do today. The annual goal has increased to 150 baskets, distributed amongst four local charity organizations, including VWTH. There are incredible business owners who contribute to the baskets to make this possible.

Thank you, Lisa, for sharing your inspiring journey and supporting children and families through the Easter Basket Campaign. We are grateful to everyone who makes this amazing initiative possible. For more information, visit toylady.ca and [facebook.com/EasterBaskets4Kids](https://www.facebook.com/EasterBaskets4Kids). Donations or gifts-in-kind can be arranged by contacting Lisa Woo at **250.477.9891** or lisawoo@telus.net

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.



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.

With Our Thanks

Our very special thanks to the **Victoria Women's Expo** and **Walmart Uptown** for the opportunity to host VWTH information booths to celebrate International Women's Day in March. Congratulations to the winner of our Lucky Draw, Theresa McInally, who won a very fancy Traditional Afternoon Tea for two at the Pendray Inn and Tea House in James Bay. Thank you to the **Pendray Inn** for this kind donation.



Thank you to **Royal LePage Coast Capital Realty (RLCC)** and local RLCC realtors who made a generous group donation representing realtor commission contributions and proceeds from various local fundraising

initiatives; **Lorraine and David Kelly**; the **Provincial Employees Community Service Fund (PECSF)** and to **Second Harvest** for generously supporting our Food Security project. Gratefully, we acknowledge the financial support of the **Province of British Columbia** and their support of our 24-hour Crisis and Information Line, Spousal Assault Victim Support Program and Children in Shelter programming.

Heaps of thanks to the **Oaklands Community Association** for providing a sunny garden plot at Oswald Community Garden, and to VWTH's PEACE counsellor Paulina, who with help from her two daughters, filled the plot with nourishing soil and compost. We look forward to lots of fresh vegetables for our Shelter residents this summer and fall.

Our sincere appreciation to **David Bird** for his generous donation with thanks to Gail Reaney and Marion Knock for prompting David to make this gift.

VWTH is deeply grateful to the **Estate of Dianne Mary Frampton** for her generous bequest.



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: _____

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Please contact me about monthly giving

I have already included VWTH in my will

VICTORIA WOMEN'S
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SOCIETY

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