

Spring 2023

VICTORIA WOMEN'S
Transition
 *House*
SOCIETY

Steering a Course to a Future Free from Violence

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This first Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) newsletter of the year is a chance to reflect a little on our recent work, and our hopes and plans for the future. We've travelled through another year of turbulent waters. By keeping our focus on a vision of a society free from gender-based violence, and guided by our strategic priorities, we maintained our services to women and children fleeing intimate partner violence; we enhanced our services to marginalized groups; we supported our team by providing specialized training; and we advocated for core funding from the Provincial Government so that when combined with essential private, foundation and corporate dollars we

can maintain capacity to meet ongoing and increasing service demands.

As an example, in our commitment to reconciliation, VWTH established an Advisory Circle of Indigenous Women Leaders to provide consultation on how to improve the quality of services to Indigenous women. This Circle leads, advises, and informs our organization towards a more meaningful and culturally knowledgeable and informed approach to our work with the Indigenous women, children, and the communities we serve.

Our Langford build is on schedule, and we look forward to adding 50 units of short-term and long-term second stage housing that will give individuals and families time to find safe, affordable housing as the next stage in moving away from abusive relationships. This new project will address the waitlists for transitional housing while providing essential, on-site supportive program services.

In closing, thank you. We are grateful for all our supporters and generous donors who enable us to continue to do this vital work.


Makenna Rielly

It is with much respect to the Lekwungen 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.

A gift in memory ... Miriam reflects

"I am making this donation in memory of my dear friend Linda who passed away on November 11, 2022. Linda was a feminist in the fullest sense of the term. She was warm, generous, and wise – a mother of four sons and a grandmother, midwife, professional counsellor, professor of counselling, educational psychology and communications in education. We were academic colleagues some years ago and her intellectual breadth, creativity and laughter (lots of laughter) energized the collaborative arts-based research work that we (with others) were doing. The well-being of others, particularly women and girls, was a paramount concern and this donation to (Victoria Women's) Transition House is exactly where her wishes would rest."

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Technology-facilitated abuse is the use of technology and the internet to bully, harass, stalk, intimidate, or control a partner. The BC Society of Transition House reports that “perpetrators are increasingly misusing a variety of telephone, surveillance, computer technologies, apps and social media platforms to harass, terrify, intimidate, coerce, and monitor women and girls. Perpetrators are also misusing technology to stalk women and girls before, during, and after perpetrating sexual violence.”

Examples of digitally abusive behavior include:

- **Telling you** who you can or can't follow, or be friends with on social media
- **Sending you** negative, insulting, or threatening messages or emails
- **Tracking you** using social media to follow your activities
- **Insulting or humiliating you** in their posts online, including posting unflattering photos or videos



- **Demanding or pressuring you** to send unwanted explicit photos or videos, sexts, or otherwise compromising messages
- **Stealing or insisting** on being given your account passwords
- **Constantly texting you** or making you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you'll anger them
- **Looking through your phone** or checking up on your pictures, texts, and phone records
- **Monitoring you** using any kind of technology (such as spyware or GPS in a car or phone) to monitor your activities

- **Surveilling you** using smart home technology, smart speakers, or security cameras to track your movements, communications, and activities
- **Embarrassing or isolating you** by creating fake social media profiles in your name and image, or using your phone or email to send messages to others pretending to be you.

Because technology and apps change so rapidly it is easy to feel overwhelmed, and like we don't have control, when it comes to our digital safety. If you have children, especially teenagers, it is important to try and educate yourself about the digital world that they are almost certainly engaging with.

There is a new website developed by Women's Shelters Canada that has information about tech-facilitated gender-based violence, including excellent how-to guides to improve online safety and how to create a digital safety plan. Find it at **techsafety.ca**

Five smart ways to manage your smartphone safety

- Put a **passcode** on your phone – it's the easiest way to increase security and privacy.
- Turn off **location sharing** – always question whether it is necessary for a new app to have that information, and consider how that information might be stored or shared.
- Turn off **Bluetooth** when not in use – it can be misused to access your information or intercept your calls.
- Check your **privacy & security settings** – these controls allow you to limit an application's access to data on your phone including your location, pictures, contacts etc.
- **Update passwords** frequently – even though it's a pain to remember new passwords, it is an easy way to protect yourself from someone else, like an ex, accessing your accounts and information.

The Power of a Legacy Gift

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN LOVED ONES AND CHARITY WHEN LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

If someone were to ask “how do you want to be remembered”, what would your answer be? Do you want to be remembered for the kind of person you were? The people you loved? The contribution you made to this world?

We want to inspire you to think about your legacy, and how to keep the good work you've already started going.

Victoria Women's Transition House is proud to be part of the Will Power

initiative, a national campaign devoted to inspiring Canadians to use their Wills as a means to support their favourite causes and charities. The Will Power website has tools and resources, **including a no obligation informational calculator** to help you see the potential capacity of your estate—your gift to loved ones and to the charity of your choice. Find out more about how you can support both family and Victoria Women's



Transition House in your Will, and leave a legacy you can be proud of.

willpower.ca/why-you-should-leave-a-gift-in-your-will

For more information please contact Susan Howard, VWTH Development and Communications Director **susanh@vwth.bc.ca, 250-592-2927 ext 210**



Volunteering Weaves Us Together

BY DANIELLE DREW, VWTH VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

"The National Volunteer Week theme for 2023 is Volunteering Weaves Us Together. Volunteer Canada invites us to celebrate our individual and collective actions in creating a strong, interconnected, and vibrant community! Volunteering weaves us together, strengthening the fabric of our community by sharing our time, talent, and energy to support one another."



Student volunteers from St Margaret's School with VWTH's Maya Seymour, Community Education.

Victoria Women's Transition House would like to take the opportunity of National Volunteer Week, April 16-22, to celebrate the amazing and dedicated volunteers who use their

time and experience to create a strong, interconnected, and vibrant community within this organization.

THANK YOU TO

- our volunteer Board of Directors and Advisory Circle members who use their expertise and wisdom to guide us
- the volunteers who donate their time and skills cooking delicious meals at the Shelter, which in turns gives time for residents to attend VWTH counselling or support programs or to apply for housing
- the 50+ outreach program volunteers who assist at our walking groups and yoga classes
- volunteers who support fundraising efforts and staff VWTH information booths and tables at community events. These volunteers help share our vision and mission to community members and potential clients and provide important information about our Emergency Shelter, programs and services.

Thank you to all the volunteers who use their strength and unique skills to support Victoria Women's Transition House, and the clients we serve, in so many ways.

As each individual thread makes weaving stronger, every volunteer's actions, perspective, and abilities add to the individual and collective resilience of this organization, our clients, and the Greater Victoria Community. Volunteering contributes to Victoria Women's Transition House's ability to grow, thrive, and create change within our community and impact our community's overall wellness, now and for future generations.

Are you interested in volunteering? Visit our website for more information or connect with Danielle:

transitionhouse.net/get-involved/volunteer-program or 250-592-2927 ext. 222



Program Update

SPOUSAL ASSAULT VICTIM SUPPORT PROGRAM (SAVSP)

The Spousal Assault Victim Support Program supports victims of assault, threats, or criminal harassment by an intimate partner, as they proceed through the criminal justice system. The SAVSP team responds to referrals from the Crown, police, and other agencies. Victoria Women's Transition House has two SAVSP teams working from the Victoria Courthouse and the Colwood Courthouse. The program is developed to provide support as soon as it is needed; contact with the client is made within two days of receiving the referral.

Did you know?

- Our Spousal Assault Victim Support Program has on average 436 case files open each month.
- In 2021-22, the SAVSP program assisted 823 new clients.

Client impact story*

'Cheryl' lived with her common-law partner 'Bill' for four years enduring verbal abuse. One night, Bill's anger turned from verbal abuse to physical assault and he attacked Cheryl. Neighbours heard Cheryl screaming and called the police. Bill was arrested and the police recommended charges of assault with a weapon. At this point, police made the referral to the Spousal Assault Victim Support Program (SAVSP), and a Victim Support worker connected with Cheryl right away and was able to provide her with support. Cheryl had been isolated and was very apprehensive of disclosing any abuse, for fear of retaliation from her partner. The staff at SAVSP were able to provide emotional support; develop a safety plan and gave guidance on how to navigate through the criminal justice system.



Cheryl said that "this support empowered me to have as much control over the process as I could." The SAVSP worker assisted Cheryl in completing a victim impact statement and noted that Cheryl reflected that this was the first time she was able to have a voice and speak about the physical and emotional impact the abuse had on her. Cheryl stated that she was "grateful to be taken seriously" and has slowly begun to understand that the abuse was not her fault, and that violence in the home is not a private matter, but a crime.

**Names changed for client safety.*



Thank You

Thank you to the **Norgaard Foundation** for their \$10,000 grant in support of our children's PEACE Camps; to **Lorraine and David Kelly** for a wonderful \$15,000 gift; and to the **Grant Thornton Foundation** for the \$20,000 donation.



Photo shows (l-r) Norm Raynard, Chief Operating Officer, Grant Thornton Canada; VWTH's Susan Howard; Mike Stubbing, Managing Partner, Grant Thornton Vancouver Island.

Thank you to Head Goddess, **Cathy Noel**, the volunteers, sponsors, donors and participants of another successful **Goddess Run** event on March 5th at Elk Lake/Beaver Lake. One of three beneficiaries, donations to VWTH for the event totalled over \$12,000! We are extremely grateful to everyone who ran, walked, and supported us.



Special acknowledgement to our Charity Champion **Deborah Rogers** who led a fundraising team based on the Saanich Peninsula. The Seaside's Peninsula Powerhouses raised over \$7,000 for VWTH programs and services.

Mark your calendars! There will be a **Virtual Goddess Run** taking place in June – find all the details, sign up, and fundraise for Transition House at goddessrun.ca

Our thanks to **Nomad Market Events** for making VWTH the beneficiary of the Fashion Splash event's Silent Auction – \$1,505 was raised at a fun, inclusive evening of fashion and entertainment.

Many thanks to all our "in-kind" donors including **Butterfly Gardens** for entry passes for our clients; **Canadian Tire**

Langford for a Christmas tree and decorations for the Shelter; **Save On Foods Colwood** for boxes of diapers, baby soothers, teething toys and other baby accessories, and donations of shampoo and soap from individual donors. **Flowers for U** delivered beautiful Valentine's bouquets that were shared with residents of our Emergency Shelter and 3rd Stage housing – thank you Calvin.

Victoria Women's Transition House was saddened to learn of the passing of VWTH supporter and donor, **Brian Cameron**, this fall. We wish to thank **Roslyn Cameron, Lee Ferreira, Laura Ferreira and Stephen Titus - Ferreira Family Fund 2021** held at the Victoria Foundation, and **Rima and Donnell Cameron** for their generous donations in Brian's memory.

We are deeply grateful to the **Estate of Kenneth Roy Prior** for the very generous bequest.

These are only highlights of the many generous cash and in-kind donations received by VWTH over the last few months. We are grateful for all the support.



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 send me information about making a gift in my will to VWTH

☐ Please contact me about monthly giving ☐ I have already included VWTH in my will



Crisis and Information Line
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