

we do!!!!

# **The Vancouver Women's Health Collective**

## **- who is Celebrating 25 years of Women's Health - Women's Way**

It all started in 1971, when a woman who was extremely dissatisfied with the service she received from her doctor, ran an ad in the paper, inviting women to meet and share their similar experiences. And low and behold, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective was born...**kicking and screaming!** Now, 25 years later, we proudly reflect back on the years and revel in our accomplishments.

What have we accomplished over the years? To give a very brief overview a few descriptors come to mind...self-help clinics, a woman's health information and referral library, a help phoneline, support groups, workshops, forums, publications, conferences, research projects, lobbying, advocacy and networking.

Today, the Collective continues to "**help women to help themselves**" in accessing their health care needs through various activities. These include our ongoing information centre and phonelines, support groups on such topics as menopause, lesbian issues and post-abortion, free counseling sessions, special events and workshops on current women's health issues, outreach projects such as our health advocates training project, and networking liaisons with many organizations on a local, provincial and national level.

We have consistently taken an active role in the health care reform process. With less medical services available and the government expecting the consumer to be more judicious in accessing the system - it is volunteer run organizations like ours that are taking the burden of this shift 'Closer to Home'. Yet is there money for services like ours? **No!** so far all that has happened is a restructuring of bureaucracies and existing medical services with no money being put into preparing the consumer for this downloading of responsibility. Ok ok so maybe we can't save the system as much money as Mike Harris but for 25 years we have taken the lead in helping women make healthy choices about their health care which usually results in less cutting and medicating, greater consumer satisfaction and a more educated & less dependent population - all on a shoe string budget.

...And to this end we leap into the future with the unveiling of our **Women's Health Information Network** (WHIN). **WHIN** is an outreach program which is composed of both a computerized women's health information database and community health advocates. Women will now have direct access in their own communities, answering the need for accessible health information and provides a means for women to better look after their health & that of their families.

so we're having a 25th Anniversary fund-raiser...kicking off with a big one **December 4th 8m** at Richard's on Richards with singer **Laura Love** kicking off her new CD release providing the music for our birthday party - so come on down and help us celebrate. **Do you have a story to tell about the place the VWHC has played in your life? give us a call we'd love to add your to our herstory.**

**See you on the 4th!**



**how many 25 year olds do you know who have**

- ☆ **written 31 health publications**
- ☆ **assisted over 3,800 women to obtain abortions**
- ☆ **insured an ongoing voice for women in the health care industry**
- ☆ **validated 1000's of women's experiences of their health practitioners**
- ☆ **saved hundreds of women's reproductive organs (uterus, ovaries, breasts)**
- ☆ **personified the very heart of health care reform 21yrs prior to New Directions**
- ☆ **shared her library collection of over 2,000 titles and 3,000 articles of health info**
- ☆ **saved the health care system more money than Mike Harris WHILE increasing services**

**and is presently birthing a computerized  
baby???**