

D.E.W. DROP IN

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
MAY 1997

FREE



spring dinner at the womens centre

The Spring Dinner at the Centre last month was very slow. We had a party and only 200 women attended, usually we serve up to twice that many women, about 400. It was not on Easter week, is that why or was it because noone knew about our dinner. Was everyone turkeyed out! WHY Inquiring minds want to know. If you have suggestions to improve our dinners, let us know.

Despite the lower than normal turn out, those who were present had an enjoyable time, there was excellent food and of course the company was great. We served turkey and ham with all the fixings. There was a chocolate suprize for all diners.

The volunteers and staff worked very

hard to make everyone feel welcome and special. There were festive decorations, and beautiful fresh cut flowers at Chez DEWC Bistro. Did women notice the new decor? There are pictures of Downtown Eastside women, that were taken at the Feburary 14th Memorial March, beautifully framed and hung on the East wall above the Staff offices. Check it out.

Every year we have three big dinners, Spring Dinner, Harvest Dinner and of course Christmas. It is really difficult to accommodate 400 women and children at our Centre. Sometimes it feels like people are being rushed in and out. We don't like that but if there are any other solutions we'd like to try them.

From the Steering Committee
Downtown
Eastside
Women's Centre †



We are now approaching the final stretch as your Steering Committee. As the Annual General Meeting draws near (June 23, 1997) we felt it important to let you know how things are going. It has been a very long hard year with many ups and downs. We have all experienced a lot of stress, some hurt and plenty of learning experiences. We have had a number of personnel issues, personality issues, steering committee member issues and overall power issues. We know that you have heard rumours and rumblings and we want you to know that we can see the light, the fog has lifted. We are working through all of these issues and have hired consultants who are specialist in conflict resolution and plan to help us 'heal' our organization.

We apologize for all the upsets you have felt during the past few months. We are aware that you all have felt the pain of our conflicts and it, at times, has felt uncomfortable. Many of you have chosen to stay away from Women's Voice meetings because you

have not felt safe or you have not felt heard. For this we are very sorry. You all need to know that we really feel that the worst is behind us and we are all now working collectively and are committed to improving every aspect of the Centre's operations. This year has been a great learning experience for us all and we believe that the DEWC will benefit in the long run and will grow from these hard times. We now need to concentrate all our energies in working together to fight the Government cut backs, BC Benefits, poverty, abuse, violence and all the basic issues of: food, health and home. After all that is why many of us choose to work together, and why so many of us need the Centre.

We have accomplished a lot of great things together and have made a difference. Let's look to the future. The upcoming year will be the best one yet.

In Sisterhood, Trust and Harmony,
Suzanne - Co-Chairperson

DEWC Steering Committee

Doctor 's In The House

Every Wednesdays

11:30 - 1:15

The Women's Centre will have a Doctor in the Centre every Tuesday morning from 11:30 - 1:15.

Do You Need a Doctor?

Dr. Vikki King, a Medical Doctor who works out of the Downtown Eastside Health Clinic, the Needle Exchange and Oaktree Clinic, has been sponsored by the DE Health Clinic to spend a few hours here at the Centre every week. Some of you may have already met her at one of the clinics, or here at DEWC, as she began her visits here on Tuesday, April 22nd. Vikki will be in the Centre every Tuesday between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. She would like to spend her time here letting all of us get to know her, so that it's easier and "safer" to go and see her when we have medical problems. She will be giving basic medical advice here, and arranging to see women at the clinic to address any major problems. Vikki will NOT be prescribing medications out of the Centre, but if you have a problem that you believe needs attention, she will arrange to accompany you to the clinic to help you there. Please make her feel welcome, and don't hesitate to say hello and have a chat with her even if you're feeling well and doing great.

The Unity Button is a reminder of the medicine wheel and the four directions as taught to us by our elders. In traditional storytelling, many elders teach about equality and respect for all the people of the four colors. That is what the campaign behind the unity buttons is all about. Equality and respect for all. It is a celebration of our identity as aboriginal people in the diversity of ways that may be expressed. The widely recognized symbol can be embraced in many different ways. The symbol itself has a long history in Native culture inspired by the teachings of our elders, and is meant to activate the duties and responsibilities that the medicine wheel teaches. The most important place on the button is where the four colors meet. People who wear this symbol are proclaiming not only pride in their own culture but respect for all the other cultures of the world. When you wear one of these buttons people tend to stop and ask you - What it is and What it means, and this is precisely the idea. It is a means for sparking communication to get us talking to one another, and to share our pride in Aboriginal culture. For more information call: 416-763-9127



THE DEWC DROP-IN CENTRE

My comfort zone and second home is the DEWC Drop in Centre
Where a coalition of women keep a positive atmosphere happening; like a mentor.
The majority of times we do get on each other's nerves,
And it's not like a piece of cake or Hor'dorves.
But it's a place for relaxing over coffee or tea and meeting new friends,
A place to go for comfort, a shoulder to lean on, or simply making amends.
And if you are in need of any legal advice or a dispute with the Ministry,
The staff is always there to listen and offer a helping hand by
resolving problems that you disagree with.
But most of all the door is 'ALMOST' always open to any woman in need,
It also provides many different activities and programs or educational groups
for any participants,
And a volunteer is there to help you deal with things that are far important or very urgent.
By taking down your inter' and information,
they will direct you to the right advocate worker there,
However there are rules to follow and abide by, but most of all relax and pull up a chair.
Also...you can count on the facilitators and coordinators to help make your ends meet,
Because they do understand how rough and tough it out there,
especially if you are on the street.
And being a parent makes it tougher trying to survive on a welfare check they give you,
That at times you feel like pulling out your hair from every root screaming;
'What should I do!?'
But this is not necessary, all the time, when there are places to go.
All you need to do is ask around, or look at bulletins for any inf.
Or ask a friend about Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, because
this little domain is like a family tree,
The 'Centre' may not be able to get you out of your destitute and poverty.
But we are all friends here and know how to support each other,
And you may rely on us if you want a comfort zone,
for we are all women learning to stick together.
At anytime, my friend, the door is open, like open arms and honest minds with a big heart
Where services are free for your convenient shopping
from any low-cost stores to a Shoppers Drug Mart.
This is an example of what can be provided for your necessities.
But if you are not satisfied with the provisions given above,
at least we've done our best to please

Recipient'
MARIE K.

From the DEWC thank you Marie for these wonderful words - it is a privilege and an honor to work with the women in the Centre

.FREEDOM-FIGHTER

a song by
Moonyne Andrews (1989)

Refrain

Freedom Fighter Freedom Fighter,
Carry your own bags on your back,
and I'll give you my sack,
to carry home when I am gone.

I see the holy ghost comin for my soul,
I see the devil with his three prong pole
They are comin for me now - now

My feet are sore from travellin;
My heart aches from fightin;
They call me Freedom Fighter Woman;
Fight for freedom - yes I can - I can.

But when the gray mist covers the
night,
And you can see me no more to fight;
Pick up my sack friend and carry on,
Finish my work when I am gone.

Many prisoners are taken in the dark,
Tied, starved, -
 Dumped in the Park;
Some escape, some are bought off,
Most are never seen again - again



LOVE

Perhaps love is like a resting place.
A shelter from a storm
A place to give you comfort.
A place to keep you warm.
And in those times of trouble and you
don't know what to do;
The memory of love will see you
through.

Perhaps love is like a window, perhaps
an open door,
It wants you to come closer, it wants to
show you more
And even if you should lose yourself,
the memory of love will see you
through.
Love to some is like a cloud, for some
as strong as steel,
For some a way of living, for some a
way to feel.

Some say love is holding on, some say
letting go,
Some say love is everything, some say
letting go,
Perhaps love is like an ocean, full of
conflict, full of pain,
Or like a fire when it's cold outside,
Or thunder when it rains.

author unknown

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
 44 East Codova St., Vancouver
 681 - 8480
 MAY 1997

**LUNCH SERVED
 DAILY AT 12:30**

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

AIDS - Margareth from AIDS Vancouver will be here every Mon. at 2:00. To answer your questions or for support.
Learning Group - Every Monday, doors close at 5:15. Exploring different ways of Learning.
Doctor in the House - Tuesdays feom 11:30 - 1:00. No prescriptions of full consultations. Refferals, assistance, resources and a willing ear to listen to your medical problems.
Kathy the Nurse - is in every Wednesday from 1:00 - 2:00.
Alcohol and Drug Support Group - Wednesday from 5:00 - 8:00, do you have or had a drug and/or alcohol problem. This may the place to get some support, no preaching or guilt trips.
Law Student - There wil be no Law Students in this month.
Newsletter Development Group - meets every Thursday morning at 11:00 to work on the DEW Drop In. The Centre newsletter.
Women's Voice - Thurs. 1:30. Let us know what you think about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed.
Women Surviving Together - Thurs. 5:00 - 8:00 Healing Circle and support group for women.
Raffles - Fridays at 1:30 or 2:00. Items which are not clothing items that have been donated to the Centre are raffled.
Volunteer Nights - Every Friday from 5:00 - 9:00 just for volunteers to hang out, do activities and workshops.
CRAFTY WORKSHOPS - Materials provided.
Ceramic and Tile Painting - Every Monday. Make something that you can use everyday or paint a tile that will be installed in the 'New' Centre when we get one.
Banner Project - Wednesday morning 11:00, contribute to the growing DEWC banner. Make your own panel.
Beading with Leona - Every Wednesday, 1:30 pm. Learn how to bead, expand you skills or just share ideas.
Dreamcatchers with Julie - Every Thursdays. Trap those bad dreams. Learn new styles and use a variety of different materials.
Fabric Arts with Freeda - Every Friday morning. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.
OUTINGS - Usually on Tuesdays. Also stay tuned to the Activities Board for RUSH tickets to events.
May 6 at 2:00 - Off to the aquarium to catch some fish.
May 7 at 5:00 - Wednesday night. Off to Tina and Tony's Wedding an interactive theatre production in an actual church!!
May 15 at 1:30 - Thursday, An Arts Club presentation of a modern musical about poverty and desperation. The 3 Penny Opera.
May 20 at 2:00 - Visit to the largest Buddist Temple in North America
May 27 at 1:00 - Couldn't get any fish at the Aquarium so we'll try at Horseshoe Bay. Powerboat ride and fishing. Go for the ride.

SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
		Monday 10:30-5 Tues. 11:30-5 Weds. 10:30-5	Thurs. 10:30-5 Fri. 10:30-5 Sun. 12:00-5	1 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	2 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	3 CLOSED
4 2:00 Video	5 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Tile Painting 5:00 Learning Group	6 11:30 Doctor is in 2:00 Outing to Aquarium	7 11:00 Banner Project 1:00 Kathy the Nurse 1:30 Beading 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group 5:00 Theatre outing	8 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	9 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video	10 10:00 - 4:00 Anger Management Workshop Volunteers only
11 2:00 Video	12 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Make stuff out of clay 5:00 Learning Group	13 11:30 Doctor is in 2:00 Women's Centre Videos	14 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	15 1:30 Theatre Outing - 3 Penny Opera 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	16 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	17 CLOSED
18 2:00 Video	19 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Paint Ceramic 5:00 Learning Group	20 11:30 Doctor is in 1:00 Hepitisis Info Session 2:00 Visit to the Buddist Temple in Richmond	21 CHEQUE DAY CENTRE OPEN 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	22 1:30 Women's V'oice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	23 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	24 CLOSED
25 2:00 Video	26 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Paint Picture Frame to take home. 5:00 Learning Group	27 11:30 Doctoris in 1:00 Fishing in Horseshoe Bay	28 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	29 1:30 Women's V'oice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	30 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	

Sign up sheets are put up at the beginning of the month, even though there is a waiting list chances arre there will be space available.

NOTE: Sometimes things get canceled or set up on another day make sure to check Update sheet" on the front chalk board and Activities Board***

VOLUNTEER NEWS

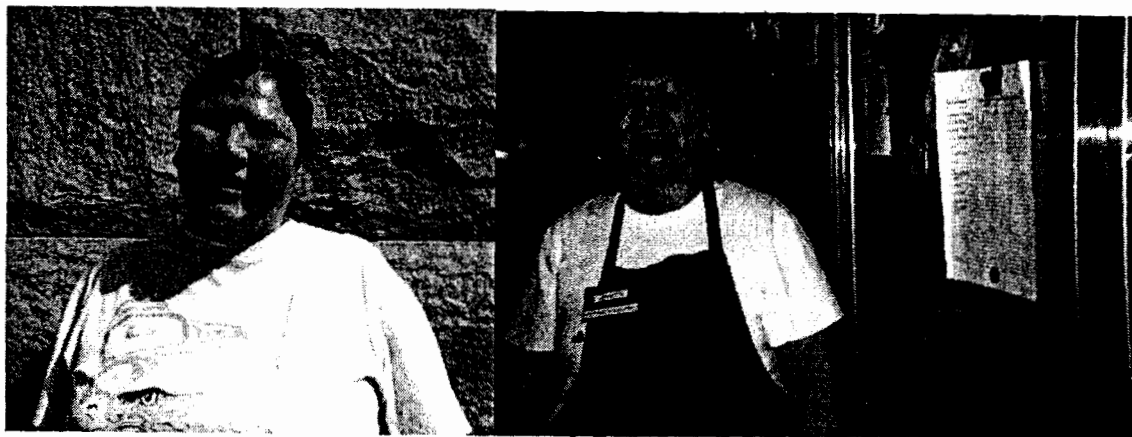
The workshop on Conflict Resolution was not very well attended but those present felt that the workshop was very helpful. Women learnt ways to deal with issues in their lives, in one to one situations and in group situations. For those interested there will be an Anger Management Workshop on Saturday, April 10th from 10 - 4. This will also be presented by Nym Hughes who teaches at the Justice Institute. This is only for volunteers. Take this excellent opportunity to participate in workshops that usually cost hundreds of dollars for the low cost of - FREE. Lunch is also provided. Give it a try. The Volunteer Dinner was a great success, there was Steak and Lobster for almost everyone!! We discussed Extended hours at the Centre and other issues at the Centre, ie. where is that suggestion box, CYNTHIA! Sorry but I hope to have it up by the end of

he month. After dinner we had a BINGO-A-THON.

We had our first 'New Volunteer Orientation' last month and it was quite a success. There were 3 new volunteers and you will probably meet them sooner or later, please make them feel welcome. This month the orientation is on Thursday, May 22nd from 10:00 - 1:00.

Now that Spring is finally here how about a BBQ at Stanley Park for all the Volunteers, there were suggestions that we could go bowling or even to the movies. If you have any ideas please speak to Cynthia.

DON'T FORGET THESE DATES	
FRI MAY 2	Volunteer Nite
FRI MAY 9	No Volunteer Nite
SAT MAY 10	Anger Management Workshop
FRI MAY 16	Volunteer Nite
THUR. MAY 22	New Volunteer Orientation
FRI MAY 23	Volunteer Nite



VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



A poem for thought

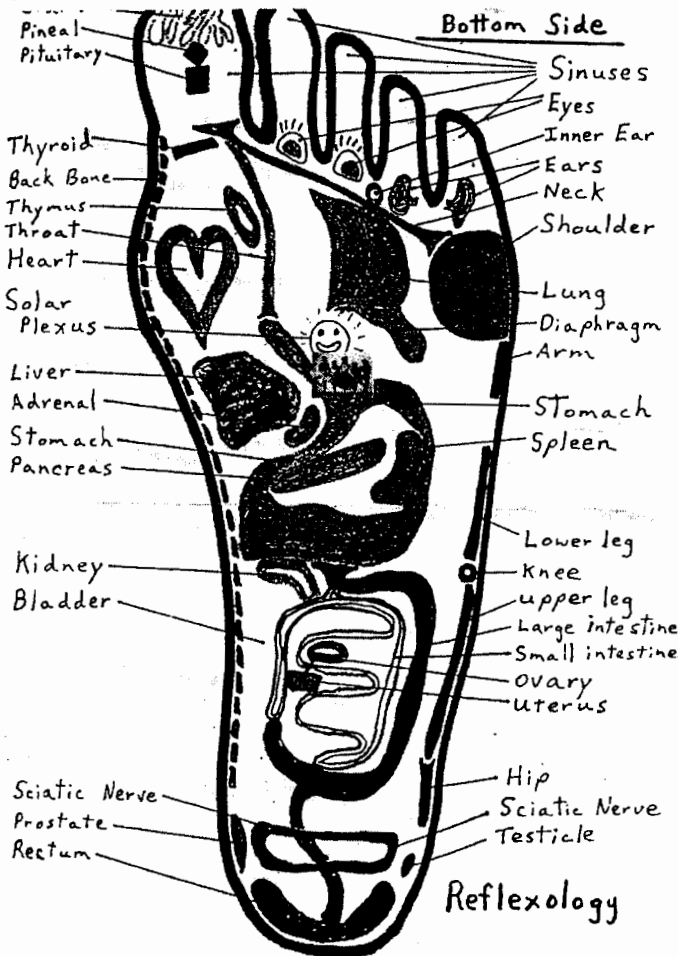
I scrub myself until I gleam
 But I never get psychologically clean
 All the perfumes, talc and soaps
 They all conspire to give me hope
 That I will be psychologically clean

My skin is dry, cracked and red
 Sometimes I wish that I were dead
 Because I know I'll never be free
 Of the dirtiness on my skin
 that haunts me

Day and night
 I must confess
 That I truly am a woman obsessed

Now there's nothing left to say
 Except that tomorrow is another day
 Of the invisible dirt that I can't see
 That constantly taunts
 and laughs at me

Brenda



REFLEXOLOGY

There is a belief that all the nerves in the body end at the soles of our feet and there are specific pressure points to activate different parts of our body. This is particularly useful for internal organs. For example if you have an ailment in your stomach you should gently massage the region on the sole of your feet that corresponds to the stomach. Of course this is a simplification. People study for years to get it right. It won't hurt if you try it yourself.

**Hand out provided by Ann Wilson,
 kitchen supervisor.
 Feed the body and feed the sole.**

Really Important information from our Advocates



MORE WELFARE REGULATIONS TARGET POOR

REPRINTED FROM APRIL ELP NEWSLETTER

It wasn't enough for the government to take \$96 a month from thousands of people who are mentally or physically unable to work. They made other regulations to the BC Benefits Acts in March. These regulations mean:

Failure to look for work: The government says that people who fail to seek work, fail to take training or work, or withdraw voluntarily from training or work, or people who are fired or quit work will not be able to get welfare for a certain period of time.

If you are cut off and have children, you can apply for hardship assistance. If you don't have kids, you can't get hardship.

Temporary Excuses: Your Financial Assistance Worker can decide if you can be "temporarily excused" from seeking work or training if you have a medical problem.

Appeals for Training: You can't appeal access to training programs unless you have a disability.

Appeal Process Changes: Appeal regulations say that if you appeal a cut-off or a reduction in your monthly welfare rate, you will receive your original rate from the time the Ministry receives your appeal request. The new regulation makes people repay this money if their appeal fails.

If a person is appealing their basic monthly welfare cheque being cut off, the appeal won't continue unless the person agrees to repay the amount if the appeal is turned down.

Disqualification for Welfare

Fraud: If a person has a civil or criminal conviction for welfare fraud, or if they sign a written admission of fraud, they can be disqualified from getting any welfare for up to three months.

Hardship would be available only if children were involved and would have to be paid back.

Outstanding Warrants: People who are wanted (not convicted) for indictable offenses, or on immigration warrants cannot get welfare. They can't get hardship unless children are involved.

Co-op Share Purchase: The Ministry can loan people on welfare up to half of the cost of a co-op share purchase to a maximum of \$850.00. It has to be paid back.

Dental and Eye Benefits: The Ministry used to replace glasses after three years. Now it's four.

People will have to be on welfare for six months before the Ministry will pay for dental care or dentures for adults.

Hardship Changes: If you are waiting for an Employment Insurance (EI) cheque and have to get welfare, you have to pay back welfare benefits you get to cover the two week EI waiting period. This measure "shows the mean-spiritedness of the government," says BC Coalition of People with Disabilities advocate Robin Loxton. "They are making people pay back money that they don't even get from EI." This rule does not apply if you have children.

Hardship is also ended for people whose income is over the welfare amount unless you have children. An example would be a low-income working person whose cheque was stolen. Under the old rules, they would have been able to get hardship. They can't now.

Hardship is also ended for people who have "excess assets."

There will be limits to the time you can receive hardship if you don't have ID.

Security Deposits: Security deposits are now repayable. The first one is repayable when you request the second one or when you leave the system.

Residency Requirement: The three month residency requirement is ended starting March 15th.

MISSION INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE



Gambier Island

Mission Medicine Wheel



eagle watching



GET WITH THE PROGRAMS GO ON AN OUTING