

D.E.W. DROP IN DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE

DECEMBER 1997 JAN '98

FREE



1998 has started off very well, we survived Christmas didn't we. Cash donations are up, we have a new HIV worker and we will be getting a new van for the Centre, that's just in January. The New Year holds many promises for the Centre as an organization. There will be structural changes that will mean that the Centre will be able to provide better services to women. This is also our 20th year, we have grown from a living room to a full scale service, community based organization. It is a very exciting time, in this year we want to accomplish a lot; opening on Saturdays, a new place for the Centre, open longer hours, more food services, more programs and workshops. This will be achieved because of the commitment of women from the Centre, volunteers, staff members and especially women like YOU.

Have a great year and the best for everyone in 1998.

This was the best Christmas ever, that's what we say every year. It's true! It was a wonderful time to be had by all at the Japanese Language School. This was the first time that we have had our party outside the Centre. We got to sit down and relax with family and friends. There were over 400 women and children who attended. Santa and his elves were there and everyone got presents and lots of food. There was music, Christmas sing along and a performance by members of Sawagi Taiko, a Japanese women's drum group. Most of all it was wonderful to see everyone there having a good time and enjoying the Christmas Spirit. The hall looked very festive with wreaths, poinsettias and other Christmas stuff. Because there were problems and next year it will be even better. We did miss some regulars and if there are any reasons why people did not want to attend the Dinner please speak to a staff member. Everyone would show up at noon and there was not enough room to seat everyone. We apologise to the women and kids who had to wait outside. Next time we will give out tickets. It was also difficult to move because there were so many people moving around, getting presents, serving food, getting coffee, etc. Let us know what you thought of the party and give us some suggestions about next year. Like should we be having it out of the Centre again?



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On Christmas day we had a lovely Pancake Breakfast with bacon and soufflé. There were over 60 women in the Centre, we sang carols. There were presents and lots of other goodies

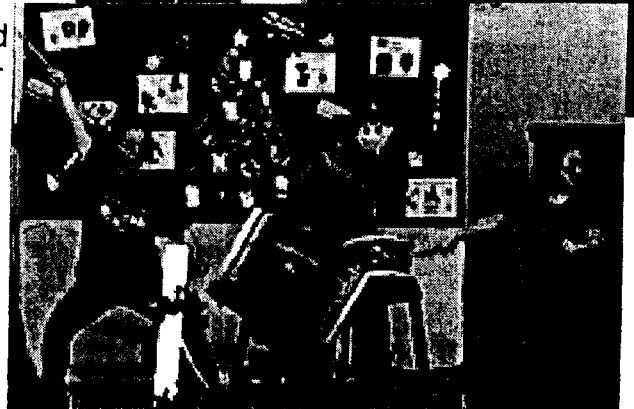


*THIS IS A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
WE GOT FROM A KIND SOUL
WHO BROUGHT DONATIONS
INTO THE CENTRE*

Happy Whatever

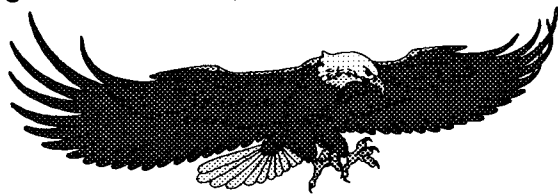
I live in a car and am still getting the support section of my check. I have heard people have been cut off for no good reason. I don't have a lot to give, but believe "Kindness is the answer"; and hope some of the things will be useful for those who can't buy gifts, to wrap and give to someone today, or to themselves. PEACE - not shopping - be with you all.

A heart felt Thank you to all who donated to the Centre, your generosity will go a long way.



VOLUNTEER NEWS

On December 6th we lost a long time Centre Volunteer. Anne Bisson passed away at St. Paul's Hospital on Dec. 6th. She will be missed and her memory will be treasured by all of us. Thank You Anne for all that you have given us.



On the 30th of December we had a memorial for Anne, there was a lot of sadness for our loss but there was also lots of memories, people expressed happiness in sharing stories. Her grumpiness and her passion for bingo were just some of the endearing qualities that we remembered and laughed about. She had also had other wonderful qualities that she shared with us.

There was a prayer and a guest book for women to sign to acknowledge our grief at losing such a brilliant star. To twinkle eyed Annie, we miss you and wherever you are, watch over us.



It has been a very difficult year for the Centre. There have been considerable organizational chaos, internal rifts, personality clashes, conflicts of interest and power struggles. In addition to all of this we all have to deal with the daily stresses of poverty, sexism, violence, ageism and all other forms of oppression. The Centre provides services to over 3,000 members per month. We have grown so much in twenty years, it has been difficult adjusting to the changes. Especially when the space is so small. The Centre has been around for twenty years and will be around for another twenty. Staff members, Steering Committee members and volunteers will change but the Centre will always be here for women.

I would like to thank all the volunteers for helping at the Centre in the past year. It has made my job so much easier and much more pleasant. I believe in the Centre and I really enjoy the company and spirit of our little family. There are always tough and difficult times, sadness and tragedy, everyday in our lives. You are strong, selfish, funny, sensitive, stubborn, resourceful, determined, bad tempered, helpful, considerate, witty, hard working and diverse women. You have touched my life. I have learnt about myself and acquired skills to be a better person. Now if only I learn to use those skills effectively. I say this all the time but it is true, I feel very fortunate and honored to be able to work at the Centre. I will always treasure experiences and friendships gained at the Centre. From my heart, Happy New Year and the very best to you.

Volunteers, require patience and generosity to work in the Centre with Centre members and Staff. I want to make your work here at the Centre a positive experience, I need your input to help me.

There was a Volunteers Only meeting on December 9th; Everyone was reminded about the Dec. 13th Christmas planning meeting. Candance attended the HIV/AIDS meetings with Christine Hutchinson and informed us of what was discussed. More aboriginal women are needed to participate in the meetings. We talked about the eulogy for Anne. We want name tags for volunteers, maybe with pictures. The kitchen staff should speak out to let the volunteers know if they need extra help, such as for peeling potatoes. We wanted clarification on the Gift Certificates. A reminder that the Volunteer dinner was on Dec. 19th at the Keg.



Fifteen of us went to the Keg at Granville Island for the Volunteer Dinner Christmas. It all started out rather badly, there were no taxis available, we had to wait for over an hour then still no cab. Creative thinkers make their own rules, some volunteers headed out and hijacked a cab. Eventually we all gathered at the Keg, the meals were wonderful, they had to slaughter a whole cow for us. There was also wonderful seafood and of course the company was exceptional.

VOLUNTEER DATES TO REMEMBER	
Fri. Jan. 9	2:30
Meeting of volunteers - We will meet at the Centre at 2:30	
Thurs. Jan. 15	10:00
New Volunteer Orientation	
Sat. Jan. 17	10:00
Basic computer lessons to Volunteers	
Sat. Jan. 31	12:00
Volunteer meeting with coordinator - We will be going for lunch at White Spot then shopping at Zellers with our Christmas Gift Certificates	

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
 44 East Codova St., Vancouver
 681 - 8480
 JANUARY 1998

**LUNCH SERVED
 DAILY AT 12:30**

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Learning Group - Every Monday, doors close at 5:15. Exploring different ways of Learning.
Internet - Learn to use the Internet or expand and get information from the Net.
Wenlido - Women's Self Defense will be on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30. Great exercise and learn valuable skills
Community Nurse - is in every Wednesday from 1:00. There will be two workshops scheduled for this month.
Alcohol and Drug Support Group - Wednesday from 5:00 - 8:00, do you have or had a drug and/or alcohol problem. This may be the place to get some support, no preaching or guilt trips.
Law Student - PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE.
Women's Voice - Thurs. 1:30. Let us know what you think about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed.
AIDS - Margareth from AIDS Vancouver will be here every Thurs. at 2:00. To answer your questions or for support.
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.
CRAFTY WORKSHOPS - Materials provided.
Beading with Leona - Every Monday, 1:30 pm. Learn how to bead, expand your skills or just share ideas.
Ceramic and Tile Painting - Every Thursday. Make something that you can use everyday or give to a friend.
Fabric Arts with Freeda - Every Friday morning. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.
OUTINGS - Watch the Outing Board for RUSH tickets to events.
 Wed. Jan. 7 at 2:00 - We're going to Stanley Park to visit the petting zoo and go on a train ride on the miniature train.
 Wed. Jan. 14 at 2:00 - See new exhibits at Science World and see the big screen presentation of the Space program MIR.
 Wed. Jan. 21 at 1:00 - Swimming and playing at the Water park in the Evelyn Daly Recreational Centre.
 Wed. Jan. 28 at 1:00 - We're going to Mount Seymour to ride some totally awesome sleds. - Be prepared for fun!
 Sign up sheets are put up at the beginning of the month, even though there is a waiting list chances are there will be space available.
 NOTE: Sometimes things get canceled or set up on another day make sure to check.

SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
		CENTRE HOURS Monday 10:30-5 Tues. 11:30-5 Weds. 10:30-5		1 HAPPY NEW YEARS CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 4:30 12:00 Pancake Breaky 12:30 Karaoke Sing-along 2:00 Tile Painting	2 10:30 Sewing and alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video	3
4 2:00 Video	5 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	6 1:00 Internet 5:00 Wenlido - Women's Self Defense	7 1:00 Menopause - Community Nurse 2:00 Outing to Stanley Park and train ride 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	8 9:00 Feb. 14th March Planning Meeting 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Make stuff out of clay 5:00 Women Surviving Together	9 10:30 Sewing and alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video	10
11 2:00 Video	12 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	13 1:00 Internet 5:00 Wenlido	14 1:00 Community Nurse 2:00 Science World and Omnimax - Mission to Mir 5:00 A+D Group	15 10:00 Volunteer Orientation 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramic Painting 5:00 WST	16 10:30 Sewing and alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video	17 10:00 - 4:00 Basic Computers Volunteer only
18 12:00 Pancake Breakfast and Van Party 2:00 Video	19 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	20 1:00 Internet 5:00 Wenlido	21 CHEQUE DAY CENTRE OPEN 1:00 Community Nurse 5:00 A+D Group	22 12:00 Theatre Outing 2:00 Ceramic Painting 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 WST	23 10:30 Sewing and alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video	24
25 2:00 Video	26 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	27 1:00 Internet 5:00 Wenlido	28 1:00 Science World 1:00 Flu Care - Community Nurse 5:00 A+D Group	29 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramic Painting 2:00 AIDS Van. 5:00 WST	30 10:30 Sewing and alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video	31 12:00 Volunteer lunch meeting and shopping at Zellers



NEWS FROM THE ADVOCATES

Happy New Year, Everyone! I hope you all managed to have a Christmas dinner or two, and that a gift made its way to your doorstep. Christmas and the New Year can be very difficult times, especially for those of us who have lost a loved one, or who are separated from our families. If you are feeling down, please try to reach out and connect with somebody. You may even inadvertently help that person out just when she needs to be around somebody, too. Remember, the Centre's Advocates and other staff will always try to spend some time with you if you need someone to talk to.

Disability I, Disability II

Just when we finally got Social Services' new Special Needs and Disability forms figured out, the government went and changed them on us again. Yes, you read that right. The "new" Special Needs category has already been done away

with, and replaced by a category called "Disability 1." The old "Disability" category is now classified as "Disability 2." I know that this becomes more confusing as time goes on. Don't fret if you don't understand it all, you're not alone. If you have been considering applying for Special Needs or Disability, please make sure you consult an advocate for information and help with your forms.

HIV Outreach Position

As you have probably heard by now, the Women's Centre received funding for an HIV/AIDS Outreach Worker, who will be working in tandem with a new HIV Outreach Worker from DAMS. These two staff will help women **with, affected by, or at risk for HIV/AIDS** (and that means almost all of us, in one way or another) get information about HIV/AIDS; make and get to Doctor's appointments; access

counseling and advocacy services; among other things.

Attending Meetings

You may have read the Steering Committee's notice in last month's calendar that women from the Centre are welcome and encouraged to attend out-of-Centre meetings with Staff. Last month Candace Smedley attended the Provincial AIDS Strategy, and the HIV Services for Women in the DE meetings with me (MH Advocate Christine Hutchinson). It was great to have extra representation for women from the Centre at these meetings, and important for other groups in this community to see women interested and actively participating in the decision-making processes that affect us so deeply. If you are at all interested in knowing about what goes on "behind the scenes" and speaking out about your community, ask an advocate about upcoming meetings, or find out from Candace what it was like for her to attend.

Meeting Notes

Provincial AIDS Strategy

This meeting left me very disappointed. Perhaps I was expecting as broad and dramatic an action on the provincial level as has just occurred on the municipal level with the infusion of \$3,000,000.00 into the DE from the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board. However, nothing new was brought to the table. We may

slow down the epidemic in the DE, but with a (no)Strategy like this, the rest of the province is in trouble.

HIV Services for Women in DE

Among the items discussed at this meeting was the possibility of opening a part-time-hours clinic for women and children in the DE. The clinic would provide women with a safe place to go for health information and care. Also discussed was the desperate need for more Detox and treatment facilities for women. Let's hope the government takes notice!

Have a great month, everybody.

FEBRUARY 14TH MARCH

***There will be a Planning
Meeting here at the Centre on
THURSDAY, JAN. 8TH
AT 9 AM***

This is an annual event when women march through our neighbourhood in memory of our sisters who have fallen in the war against humanity. It is a time to reflect on the number of unnatural deaths of women in our lives. They are dearly missed.

Volunteers are needed to help organize the event.
For more info. speak to Marion

Women's Voice

Notes from November

EVERY THURSDAY AT 1:30.

Women come together to discuss the Centre and offer constructive suggestions and comments

Responses from staff and Steering are in italics.

Dec. 4th

The media event was great. The violence needs to stop, we would also like to see violence among women of the Centre stop. *Recommend workshops on violence. Effective communication skills. Possibly Deepa or Marion to facilitate.*

Shawn will be Centre liaison for children's issues with AWAN (Aboriginal Women's Action network) and other agencies. *Great, it would be better if another woman would get involved too.*

Sue would like to see women getting together to rent a house in a safe and cooperative fashion. *Can the Centre provide a bulletin board for exchanging info.? Can Steering 'rent' the house and then re-rent to the women with cable, phone, insurance, etc. included so women don't get dinged for extra income from welfare. We should try the first item first and see how that works. We will ask steering for their opinion.*

Shawn expressed concerns regarding the clothing room, there should be a 10 item per week limit not 10 items per day. Other women indicated that women often get clothes for family and friends who cannot come down to the Centre.

Concerns expressed that kitchen volunteers are not showing up and Julie is doing all the work by herself. *Can Julie get more help, non-volunteer women would be happy to help, if allowed. Julie thanks everyone for their concern, kitchen volunteers need the food safe certificate. Please help by taking your dishes to the bin, cleaning up after yourselves and encouraging others to do so as well. Also attend the volunteer meetings, there will be a Food Safe course for women in February for anyone interested.*

Maggie K. has been elected as the Women's Voice Rep. to the Steering Committee and Staff meetings. *This will be taken to the Volunteer meeting. What about a proper all Centre vote?*

Carol said that we should not be turning away used clothing in the weeks before Christmas. Women still need the clothing and sometimes this is all they have for gifts. Even take the donations and put them on the tables everyday as soon as it comes in. *If the past this has always been a problem, women end up fighting over the clothes and clothes are left all over the Centre. What do we do with the left overs. Our problem is we do not have enough space.*

Carol also would like to see a Social Action Committee started to deal with housing, welfare rights, lobbying, etc. *The Centre used to have a Social Action Committee as part of the Steering Committee but it has been inactive. We also have had meeting scheduled for women who are interested in Social Action, started by staff but very few women were interested. Maybe it's time to try again.*





Everyone expressed frustrations over Bridge Housing. It is taking too long and now it is up in the air again. we should just try to find a new space for the Centre with larger space and more facilities. Julie needs a better kitchen and staff needs offices, etc. Let's take over Woodward's. *It will be taken to Steering.* Stella would like everyone in the Centre to receive at least \$500 for Christmas - Preferably \$1,000. *We would like that too but we have no gun to rob a bank.*

Dec. 11

Anne Bisson's memorial. It has been rescheduled for Dec. 30th. Her body has been brought back to the Yukon and her family will be back in town on the 20th. We will need food, a eulogy by the Centre women and a card for women to sign. *We will be getting a guest book for women to sign and women are encouraged to bring in photos of Anne to be sent to her family.*

Donations are looking good. We'll have a good Christmas. Anything for family and children that we do not use for Christmas should be distributed to Centre women and children.

Staff are doing a great job. The Centre is running good. *Thanks.*

Nancy with the bracelets has touching issues. She is always touching women. *Staff will make a point of talking to her daily.*

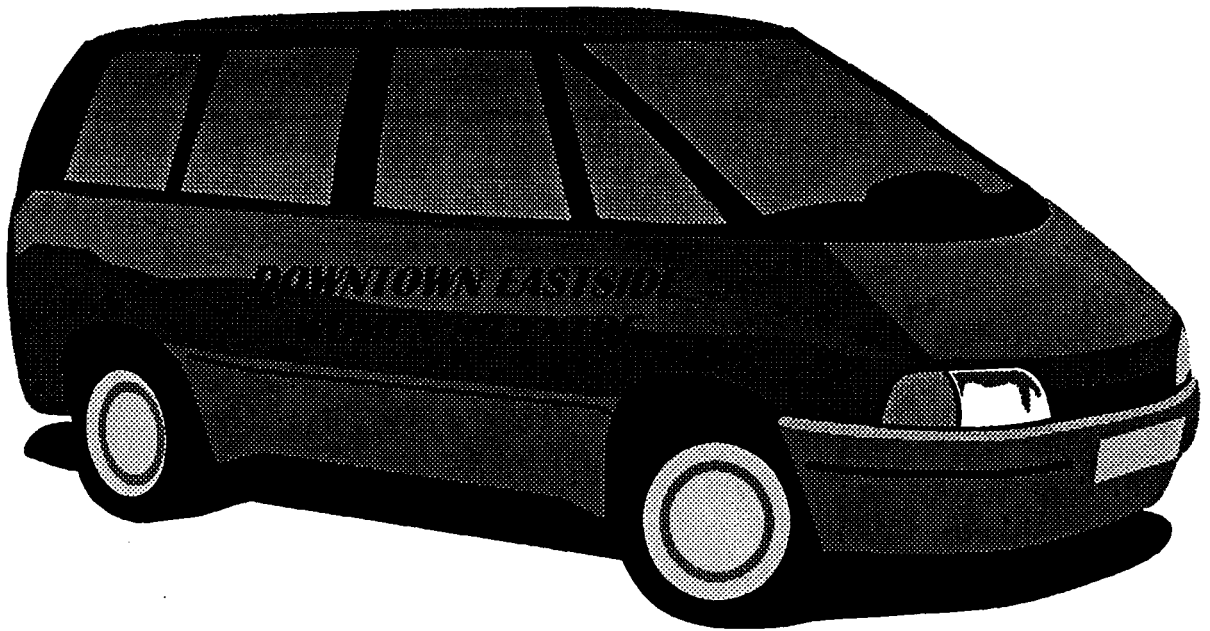
Barb admits her behavior has been erratic and apologizes for this. She had many issues going on in her personal life. Her concerns for the Centre are genuine, she formally apologized to the Centre and to Christine Wood. Chris told her that she would withdraw the two complaints she had submitted regarding Barb, today.

Deepa made an announcement about her Christmas blues workshop.

Dec. 18

Carol is very happy with the work staff are doing. Advocates are doing great work, empathetic staff really care. Poverty issues are critical. Staff are well liked, opposite of bureaucrats. *We fill the need. Thanks a lot it means the world to the staff that women appreciate it.*





Thanks to Soroptimist International Downtown Vancouver Chapter, DEWC is getting a brand new 15 passenger van. The Soroptimist have been working very hard raising funds to purchase this van.

**We will have a
thank you/hello van reception on
Sunday January 18th at noon.**

There will be a pancake breakfast
and other refreshments.

Media personnel and City officials have
been invited, all women are welcome and
there will be some men present.