

D.E.W. DROP IN

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
AUGUST 1998 FREE



**See you at the barbeque!!
DEWC BBQ
WED. AUGUST 12TH**

A GRIEVING CEREMONY

A grieving ceremony was held in Victoria on the lawn of the Legislation Buildings on Monday July 20th. This ceremony was attended by Marion, Edna, Carol and Harriet Nahanee on behalf of the Women's Centre. You may be asking what the ceremony was for? This is to do with the O'Conner case. Is it over? I would say NOT the impact of this case and the decision that was made will impact women for years to come. I am aware that the press has let this drop like a hot potato. But are we ready to just let this drop? To this I say NO!!!!

This event was organized by Women of Our People Society / Slanis Fe Wilnew LTE which is the only provincially funded specialized native women's victim services/ sexual assault centre. They are located in Saanichton, B.C. and provide outreach to women in the Victoria area.

The use of the Healing Circle by offenders, such as Bishop O'Conner, could be perceived by some survivors as a means of circumventing the justice system, minimizing the pain and trauma that has been caused to them and as an easy way out for offenders. We fear this could set a precedent that allows serious crimes against women to go unpunished. We also are concerned that offenders will use this precedent to undermine the legitimacy of the restorative / alternative justice initiatives.

We believe to accept this decision without a protest would be to help silence the voices of victims who are yet to disclose. These voices are from all over and greatly effects the women of the Downtown Eastside as we too are some of those voices of victims who are yet to disclose.

The Attorney General consulted with aboriginal women regarding the development of the A-G's Sexual Assault Policy and

appropriate justice responses to sexual assault.

The final report recommends to the Ministry that Sexual Assault should not be one of the crimes included in alternative measures or restorative justice initiatives.

This is why we went to the grieving ceremony in Victoria on Monday I see this as important work to keep this in the media and not just let it be forgotten. So we went we spoke and hopefully made some difference.

GRIEF AND LOSS GROUP FOR WOMEN

WHEN: 1-3pm Wed Afternoons
from Sept 9 - Oct 14

WHERE: DAMS - Drug & Alcohol
Meeting Support for Women
119 West Pender (Rm 112)

Preregistration is required.
For more info and to register, call Kathleen
or Amanda at 687-5454

ATTENTION ALL NEW WELFARE APPLICANTS!!!!

The Ministry of Human Resources has a new policy for ALL applicants who are applying, or reapplying for welfare. You now must attend a two day orientation session before you can even see a Financial Aid Worker to make an application. This means that you could wait for up to two weeks before you will receive benefits. This will place undue hardship on all applicants, particularly the disabled and single parents. It will also force women who are in abusive relationships to stay where they are, or force them out on the streets with their children.

They should rename themselves the Ministry of Inhuman Resources.

ELDERS FAST TO BRING CHANGE TO THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

Five elders fasted from July 5th to 9th to protest the poverty of people living in the Downtown Eastside. They fasted in Pigeon Park to draw attention to the desperate conditions people live in and the path that has brought them to this place. The elders called on aboriginal and non-aboriginal leaders to open their eyes and do something to help people. The final ceremony was held in Oppenheimer Park. Two hundred people gathered to hear their words.

The following Saturday evening, women from Women Surviving Together helped prepare food to bring to people in Pigeon Park.



Writing and Poetry

I am an alcoholic and a drug addict and my name is Charlie. Life has been hell for me and still is. 21 months ago my son, my beloved late Jason Kyle was brutally murdered at the age of 18. My world hasn't been the same since. My only escape is to stay high on drugs or alcohol. I know all the tools to use for me to go clean again however I can't seem to get out of this world of heartbreak and loneliness.

I have this enormous guilt that my son would still be alive if I hadn't been using. There is always that "what if".

To me there is no such words as can't or try, JUST DO IT! Can I? Only time will tell.

Charmaine Deschamps,
4th of July weekend



I'm sober and away from drugs for a long time. When I look back into where I was in, I remember not very nice memories - good things, bad things that accidently happened.

I felt it different I was swimming against the river, it was very difficult as a woman I had to be very strong to be myself and to get what I needed. It's been a while since I did wrong for me, my children, my partner, so I changed, I'm in school now and planning to continue it until I get what I have planned. My children are happy, they feel more safe and loved. My partner respects me a lot more...

I'm so glad I made it this far on a very good saved way and planning to keep it this way, clean and sober.

Tan

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE

44 East Cordova St., Vancouver

681 - 8480

AUGUST 1998

**LUNCH SERVED
DAILY AT 12:30**

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Learning Group - Every Monday, doors close at 5:15. Exploring different ways of Learning.

Battered Women Support Services on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30, support for women affected by violence in their lives.

The Street Nurse is on holiday for Aug. Usually she is in every Wed morning at 10:00 am to provide info on STD's, hepatitis and HIV/Aids and will do blood testing on site.

The Community Nurse - is in every Wednesday from 1:30 - 3:00.

Watch out for health tips and information. She is on vacation until Aug. 19.

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.

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 - Usually on Fridays at 1:30 or 2:00. Items which are not clothing items that have been donated to the Centre are raffled.

Stopping the Violence Discussion - Every Friday night.

Gathering to share stories and strategies to keep ourselves safe.

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, 2:00. Make something that you can use everyday or give to a friend.

Fabric Arts with Freeda - Usually on Friday morning. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.

OUTINGS - Watch the Outing Board for RUSH tickets.

DEWC BBQ - Wed. Aug 12th - in Crabb Park. Games, food and hopefully good weather! The centre will be closed at this time.

PNE TICKETS - will be available for August and Sept. See sign up sheets - the van will take women on four days

SPECIAL

Check the notice boards for info on Prisoner Justice Day, Out on Screen, Powell St Festival and the DERA Street Party.

Sign up sheets are put up at the beginning of the month, chances are there will be space available on the day of the outing.

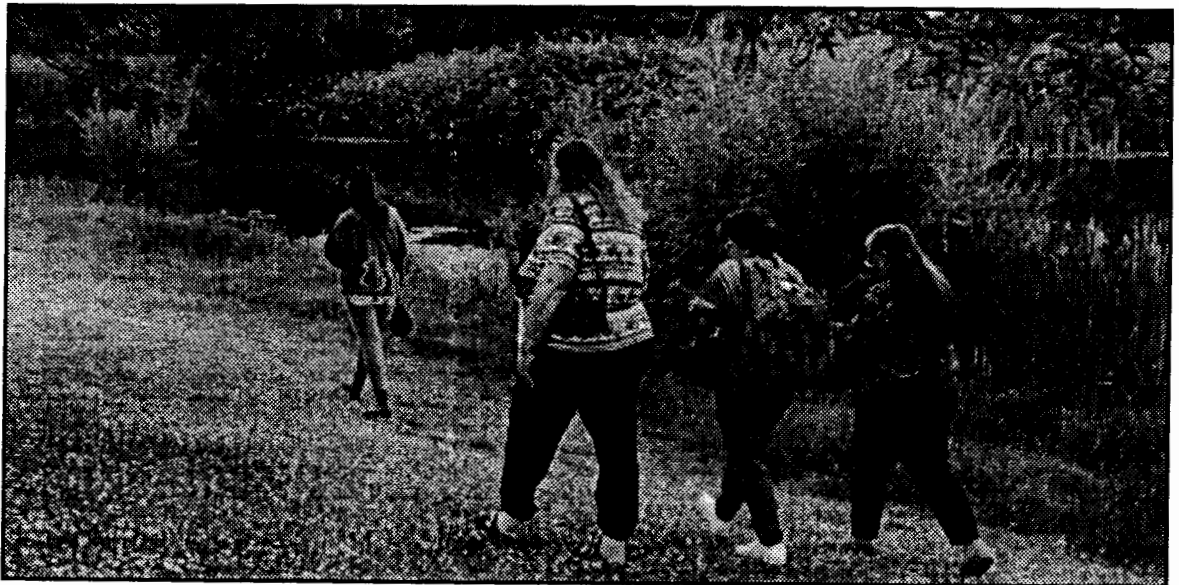
NOTE: Sometimes things get canceled or set up on another day make sure to check "Update sheet" on the front chalk board

The Activities Board will also have information on other events.

| SUN | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SAT |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| 2 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 12:00 GAY PRIDE PARADE (West End) 2:00 Video | 3 BC DAY HOLIDAY 12 - 5 (NO LUNCH) 1:30 Beading 4:30 Learning Group(for sure) | 4 2:00 Volunteers Only Meeting 5:00 BWSS | 5 Nurses on holiday 5:00 A + D Group | 6 1:00 - 4:00 Law Student 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST | 7 10:30 Sewing and Alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 2:30 Spanish Class 5:00 Stop the Violence | 1/8 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 POWELL ST FESTIVAL - AUG 1ST OPPENHEIMER PARK |
| 9 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 2:00 Video | 10 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group | 11 2:00 Volunteers Only Mtg 5:00 BWSS | 12 DEWC BBQ AT CRABB PARK! (centre will be closed) 5:00 A + D Group | 13 1:00 - 4:00 Law Student 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST | 14 10:30 Sewing and Alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 2:30 Spanish 5:00 Stop the Violence | 15 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 |
| 16 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 2:00 Video | 17 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group | 18 3:00 Volunteer Meeting 5:00 BWSS | 19 1:30 Nurse - Taking care of abscesses and cuts 5:00 A + D Group | 20 1:00 - 4:00 Law Student 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST | 21 10:30 Sewing 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 2:30 Spanish Class 5:00 Stop the Violence | 22 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 |
| 23 CENTRE OPEN 12 - 5 2:00 Video | 24 1:30 Beading | 25 5:00 Battered Women's Support S. | 26 CHEQUE DAY CENTRE CLOSED FOR PLANNING MTG 5:00 A & D Group | 27 1:00 Law Student 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST | 28 10:30 Sewing 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 2:30 Spanish Class 5:00 Stop the Viol | 29 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 |
| 30 CENTRE OPEN 12:00 - 5:00 | 31 1:30 Beading | | | CENTRE HOURS Mon 10:00-5 Tue 11:00-5 Wed. 10:00-5 Thrs. 10:00-5 | | Fri. 10:00 - 5:00 Sat 12:00 - 5:00 Sun 12:00 - 5:00 |



Women picked 24lbs of raspberries out in Richmond. The raspberries were donated to the feast marking the end to the Elder's Fast.



Medicine Walk in Jericho Park.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

UPCOMING DATES

**Tues Aug 11 - 2:00pm
Volunteers only mtg**

**Tues Aug 18 - 3:00pm
Volunteers mtg**

VOLUNTEER MINUTES - JULY 14, 1998

1. Volunteer shifts on the weekend
The shifts are now 12 - 2:30 and 2:30 - 5:00. The exceptions are the shifts in the kitchen.

2. Slips
Everyone is turning in their slips a lot more promptly. Thanks for paying attention to this. It makes it possible for us to collect better information.

3. Kitchen being asked to do floor workers tasks
The kitchen is very busy but women who are taking showers or doing their laundry are asking for assistance.

Sometimes the volunteer floor worker is at the other end of the building having a smoke. After discussing this, we decided:

- Volunteers on shift will take two 10-minute smoke breaks per shift.
- The volunteer floorworkers must spend more time in the back to make sure that women are looked after.
- Doris will make a sign telling women to talk to the staff or volunteer floorworker if they need help.
- The kitchen workers will say "sorry, but you need to talk to the floor worker" when they get asked to do floor tasks.

4. Communications Workshop
Everybody thought the communications workshop was worthwhile. Some people think it has helped to improve communication. Other women think we need more workshops such as anger management. We will continue to plan another workshop but next meeting we will all talk about what strategies we use to maintain our cool while working on shift and at other times.

5. Volunteer Meetings
Lucy is working Mon - Fri now. We decided that the afternoon meeting

was okay for everyone. There will be two meetings a month - volunteers only and volunteers with the coordinator.

Volunteers liked going out to dinner once in a while. Edna from Steering supported this idea. Lucy said she would put it into the potential budget for 4 times a year. We are over budget but if money can be found that would be ideal.

6. Food Safe

Everyone found the course hard to do all in one day. In the future, we will get the course material early so women can read it ahead of time.

7. August Programs

There are 3 potential events to attend in August and Lucy would like to consult with volunteers about which one interests them. Thee United Nations AGM in Williams Lake, the Elders Conference in Prince George and the Medicine Wheel in Mission. Sharon, Doris and Melanie are interested in the UNN and everyone is interested in the Medicine Wheel.

8. Following Food Handling

Guidelines Volunteers need to follow the guidelines and wear gloves and

hairnets while on shift. Lucy will talk to Julie to ensure that this happens.

9. Lack of Communication between Board, Staff and Volunteers

Following the volunteers' suggestion there will be a once a month meeting of B, S, and V. It will be held on cheque day from 3pm to 5pm. Edna said she finds that everyone is in their own niche and we need to work as a team. Everyone agreed. Some people also think that in some areas it is working well. Other people say there are lots of problems. Sharon and Candace will be the official representatives of the volunteers at this meeting and anyone else is welcome to go. Bunsy, Mavis and Louise are interested.

10. Doris reported back from the staff meeting

a) Weapons Policy - Women are bringing weapons into the centre. Everyone appreciates that women want to carry weapons on the street but we are worried about them being in the Centre. Two suggestions have been made. Steering thinks women should check them at the door. Staff would like a no weapons policy because they are worried about the

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day to day problems of staff and volunteers handling and keeping weapons. What do volunteers want? Volunteers want a no weapons policy.

b) Men at the Door - Men are being treated rudely at the door by women sitting in the front couches. Staff and volunteers need to let women know that men need to be treated with respect and that it is the front desk person's job to deal with male visitors. Also some women are giving

information to the man at the door about someone. This has to stop. The centre is a safe place for women in the neighbourhood.

c) Laundry Days - There are double messages about whether volunteers want an extra day for laundry or not. Right now, only one volunteer has not been able to do her laundry. Other volunteers will try and do laundry once a week and we will see how this goes.



**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN
BREAK THE SILENCE AGAINST VIOLENCE!!**

**We will be having a OPEN community discussion
for ALL WOMEN interested in joining a campaign
to fight violence in the Downtown Eastside**

***FREE MEAL *SPEAKERS *DISCUSSION & SUPPORT
What do YOU want to see happen?**

**Please join us, FRIDAY, August 21 @ 6 PM
at the DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
44 East Cordova Street**

WOMEN BREAK THE SILENCE AND SPEAK OUT!!

NEW TO THE CENTRE

Updates on workshops, policy and procedures

SAFETY CONCERNS FOR WOMEN IN THE CENTRE

It has been mentioned that women have concerns regarding their security and safety when in the centre. Just a friendly reminder, that when someone comes to the front door and asks for a woman, that woman may not wish to see whomever is asking for her. Many women come into the centre to be safe and away from others on the street. Please do not tell the person at the door whether or not she is in. Go and look for that woman, and tell her there is someone at the door for her. If she does not want to be found, advise the person at the door that she is not in.

MEN AT THE FRONT DOOR

Often we need to allow men in the centre for various reasons; such as deliveries, repairs, donations, etc. There have been too many offensive comments directed at these men, and others who come to the door. While we realize that many women have valid reasons for their anger at men, it is no excuse to belittle and insult them. It is especially disturbing that we are making gender-based statements directed at them, such as "it smells like a man at the door", and "they all need to be castrated." We need to treat each other with respect, regardless of our gender,

sexuality, religion, race or political ideology. The Women's Centre will not tolerate any disrespect here, regardless of whom is on the receiving end. **As with racist comments, sexist comments will also be reason enough to bar a woman for the day.** If we have any hope of bridging the gender gap, we need to understand that it will not be done if we behave towards men the way we accuse them of behaving towards us.

STUFF IS DISAPPEARING!

We have a problem because too many Women's Centre belongings are being stolen. Both tall floor fans were stolen. There has been theft from the offices. Even our towels are walking away! The Women's Centre does not have money to keep on replacing things. If we do that then there will be fewer meals or fewer groups offered in the evenings. Please do not take stuff from the Women's Centre.

DEWC BBQ AT CRABB PARK

Wed Aug 12th

12:00 - 4:00

kids welcome!

**(if it rains, we will have it on thurs,
Aug 13th)**