

# D.E.W. DROP IN

## DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

March 1999

Free



## CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT THE WOMEN'S CENTRE

**Saturday March 6th at 11am**

Join us for a pancake breakfast at 11am then on to the Rally

**Monday March 8th from noon to 5pm**  
**Open House**

Celebrating the achievements of women in the Centre

# Volunteer News

If you would like to know what has been happening at the volunteer meetings there are minutes available at the front desk.

Volunteers are responsible for keeping up to date of new policies, procedures and barrings at the Centre. There is a memo board at the front desk and there are copies of the current volunteer manual at the front desk.

We will be hiring a new Volunteer Coordinator soon the closing date is March 12 she will start by the end of the month. Denise S is the Volunteer rep. on the hiring Committee.



## SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM DEPENDS ON INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

### Volunteer Dates to Remember

**Saturday March 6 at 5pm**

Volunteer meeting and meal

**Saturday March 13 at 11am**

Volunteer Orientation

**Monday March 15 at 2pm**

Volunteers only meeting

**Saturday March 20 at 9am**

Food Safe Level 1

**Monday March 29 at 10am**

Leave for Retreat

**Wednesday March 31 at 2pm**

Return from Retreat

### PARTICIPATE AS EQUALS TO DEFINE THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

### Great News we are going to have a Volunteers Only Retreat

The dates are March 29th, 30th and 31st. We are going to the Sasamat Outdoor Centre in Port Moody it is a beautiful wooded site with canoing, fishing and hiking. Discussions have started for the content of the retreat. What would like the volunteers do at the retreat? There will be workshops and a facilitator, we just need to come together and decide the issues we would like to address i.e. conflict resolution, communication, anger etc. Please attend the retreat planning meeting on Saturday March 6th at 5pm, meal included.

## *To the women of the downtown eastside women's centre*

Hi, this is Deepa, DEWC's Stopping the Violence Counsellor. It's been a while since I've written in the Women's Centre newsletter, and now that I'm finally writing again it is, sadly, to say goodbye. Many of you know that I am leaving the Women's Centre to go travelling. My ultimate destination is India, where I plan to live for at least one year. I want to learn something about my language (Malayalam) and history, and I want to continue on my path of growing and healing. But it's hard to leave the Women's Centre; I'm going to miss everybody here a lot.

One of the things I want to do when I go to India is to work with women's centres over there. I would love to keep in touch with women over here, help to make connections with women on the other side of the globe. By the time you read this the replacement for my position should be hired (and I wish her luck!!) But I will be dropping in from time to time before I leave at the end of March.

It's been difficult to write this piece; it feels like there is much that needs to be said, and I don't know how to say it. I had the honour of attending a sweat lodge today with six very powerful and inspiring women. One of the themes that was expressed in that sweat, I think, was gratitude; how important it is to give thanks for and appreciate what is beautiful and strong and positive in those that you see around you. So I wanted to give some gratitudes for the women of DEWC.

Thank you to the women who shared with me the stories of your lives; it was an honour that you trusted me that much and I hope that I did justice to that trust. Thank you for showing me your tremendous strength, kindness, and patience (sometimes!) when I was tired, or didn't have the answer, or didn't get it right.

I know that it can be rough down here, and that sometimes the poverty and violence that women experience outside of the walls of the women's centre leads to violence between women, within these walls. But I've seen a lot of generosity between women, as well; and there have been many many ways in which the women of this centre have been caring and generous to me.

Thank you to the women who joke and tease and remind me not to be so serious (or quiet!) all of the time. Thank you to the women who I just say hi to once in a while, or who I'm just starting to know; I wish I had the chance to know you better.

Thank you to the volunteers who work really hard without pay, and keep the centre open and alive. Thanks especially to the volunteers, (official and otherwise), who help with my group— setting up chairs, making suggestions, washing dishes, mopping the floor, serving food... I couldn't do it without you. Thank you to the kitchen staff for always making sure there is enough food for everyone, and sometimes treating us to something special.

Thank you to my co-workers, who I don't always get the time to connect with. But I am constantly impressed by your skills, and your commitment to the women and social change.

Thank you to the women who have the courage to speak out— at rallies, meetings with politicians, and in the groups— about the injustices and pain that women in this community live with. Thank you for showing me how a community can come together around its grief for all the unnecessary deaths that happen down here.

Thank you for showing me the sheer power and strength that you have developed just in order to survive. I think that when women learn to take this power and direct it towards changing the things that are wrong, incredible things can happen.

There is a quote by a woman poet named Audre Lorde that I think about sometimes when I think about my trip. It goes like this:

**When I dare to be powerful**

**To use my strength in the service of  
my vision,**

**Then it becomes less and less important  
whether I am afraid.**

**I wish you all the best in your own jour-  
neys, paths, visions...**

In Peace and Love,  
All my Relations,  
Deepa

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE  
44 East Cordova St., Vancouver  
681 - 8480  
MARCH 1999

LUNCH SERVED  
DAILY AT 12:30

SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT																
	1 1:30 Beading 1:30 Tax Refunds 5:00 Learning Group	2 11:00 TB Testing 11:00 Make overs 2:00 Swimming 5:00 Battered Women Support Services	3 12:00 Shiatsu Massage 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	4 10:00 TB Results 10:30 Street Nurse 1:30 Women's Voice 1:30 Tax Refunds 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 Women Surviving Together	5 10:30 Sewing and Alterations 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 2:00 Spanish Classes 5:00 Anti-violence Discussion Grp.	6 11:00 International Women's Day 1:30 Dream catchers 5:00 Volunteer Meet and meal																
7 2:00 Video	8 12 - 5 Open House for IWD 1:30 Beading 1:30 Tax Refunds 2:00 Volunteer only 5:00 Learning Group	9 11:00 Make overs 1:00 Nature Walk - Serpentine Fen 5:00 BWSS	10 12:00 Shiatsu Massage 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	11 10:30 Street Nurse 1:30 Women's Voice 1:30 Tax Refunds 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST	12 10:30 S + A 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 5:00 A-V Disc. Grp.	13 11:00 Volunteer Orientation 1:30 Dream catchers																
14 2:00 Video	15 1:30 Beading 1:30 Tax Refunds 5:00 Learning Group	16 11:00 Make overs 2:00 Bowling 5:00 BWSS	17 12:00 Shiatsu Massage 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	18 10:30 Street Nurse 1:30 Women's Voice 1:30 Tax Refunds 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST	19 10:30 S + A 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 5:00 A-V Disc. Grp.	20 9:00 Food Safe Level 1 1:30 Dream catchers																
21 2:00 Video	22 1:30 Beading 12:00 Sweat Lodge 5:00 Learning Group	23 11:00 Make overs 5:00 BWSS	24 CENTRE CLOSED 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	25 10:30 Street Nurse 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Ceramics 5:00 WST	26 10:30 S + A 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Video 5:00 A-V Disc. Grp.	27 1:30 Dream catchers																
28 2:00 Video	29 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	30 11:00 Make overs 5:00 BWSS	31 12:00 Shiatsu Massage 5:00 A and D Support Group	<div>CENTRE HOURS</div> <table><tr><td>SUNDAY</td><td>12 - 5</td><td>THURSDAY</td><td>10 - 5</td></tr><tr><td>MONDAY</td><td>10 - 5</td><td>FRIDAY</td><td>10 - 5</td></tr><tr><td>TUESDAY</td><td>11 - 5</td><td>SATURDAY</td><td>12 - 5</td></tr><tr><td>WEDNESDAY</td><td>10 - 5</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			SUNDAY	12 - 5	THURSDAY	10 - 5	MONDAY	10 - 5	FRIDAY	10 - 5	TUESDAY	11 - 5	SATURDAY	12 - 5	WEDNESDAY	10 - 5		
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Volunteers Only Retreat at Sasamat Outdoor Centre Leaving at 10am Mon. Mar. 29 returning 2pm Wed. Mar. 31																						

**REGULAR PROGRAMMING**  
**Learning Group** - Every Monday at 5pm. Exploring different ways of Learning with First Nations Elder Bernice Hammersmith.  
**Battered Women Support Services** on Tuesday nights at 5pm, support for women affected by violence in their lives.  
**Shiatsu Massages** at 12pm first come first massaged. Get pampered and feel energized.  
**Alcohol and Drug Support Group** - Wednesday at 5pm, do you have or had a drug and/or alcohol issues. This may the place to get some support, no preaching or guilt trips.  
**Law Student - PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE.**  
**Women's Voice** - Thurs. 1:30pm. Let us know what you think about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed.  
**Women Surviving Together** - Thurs. 5:00pm Healing Circle and support group for women. Led by Elder Reta Blind.  
**Raffles** - Fridays at 1:30 or 2:00. Items which are not clothing items that have been donated to the Centre are raffled.  
**Spanish Classes** - Fri. from 2 - 3:30 with Amalia.  
**Anti-Violence Discussion Group** - Every other 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, 2:00pm. Make something that you can use everyday or give to a friend.  
**Fabric Arts with Freeda** - Every Friday morning, 10:30pm. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.  
**Dreamcatchers** - Every Saturday at 1:30pm. Learn different styles or work on your own projects.  
**OUTINGS** - Watch the Outing Board for RUSH tickets.  
**Swimming** on Tuesday March 2 at 2:00 - We're going to be going the the Evelyn Daly Centre in Burnaby.  
**Nature Walk at Serpentine Fen** in White Rock on Tuesday March 9 at 1:00 - This is a wilderness refuge for ducks and geese.  
**Bowling** at the Commodore Lanes on Tuesday March 16 at 2:00 - Another great exercise day for everyone.  
We will be going for a **sweat** in North Vancouver with Reta Bilind, we will be back at the Centre after 6pm. Please be here by 12:00.

Sign up sheets are put up at the beginning of the month, even though there is a waiting list there may be space available.  
**NOTE:** Sometimes events get canceled or set up on another day make sure to check "Update sheet" or the front chalk board. The Activities Board will also have information on other events.

# News from sister Alice

We are trying a new approach to News from the Advocates which is to reply to specific questions that women bring (through Women's Voice) around welfare, tenancies, child apprehension, etc.

This month the question asked was **"if you live in social housing, how do you get the landlord to make the building/complex safer"**.

The Residential Tenancy Act spells out the regulations and policies (rights and obligations) of the landlord and of the tenant. It is a provincial law. It applies to both private market and social housing (with some exceptions).

The Residential Tenancy Act is enforced by the Residential Tenancy Branch. If the landlord or the tenant have a disagreement about their rights or responsibilities they go to the Residential Tenancy Branch who will look at what the Act states about the particular situations and order either the landlord or tenant to comply with it. As with most government Acts and Regulations what is stated is often very general and open to interpretation. When going to the Residential Tenancy Branch, you need to use the piece of the Act that applies to your situation laying out how you think it should be interpreted.

For example - "how do you get the landlord to make the building safer". There are a couple sections of the Residential Tenancy Act which can be interpreted to require the landlord (social housing in this case) to make the building safe for tenants.

**8** *If a service or facility is reasonably related to a tenant's continued use and enjoyment of the residential premises, but is not expressly provided for in the tenancy agreement, the landlord must not discontinue providing the service or facility to the tenant.*

Safety could be considered a service that, although not specifically stated in a tenancy agreement, is reasonably related to the tenants continued use and enjoyment of the premises and, therefore, needs to be provided for by the landlord.

**10(1)** *The landlord must provide and maintain the residential premises and residential property in a state of decoration and repair that ...*

*(b) having regard to the age, character and location of the residential property, would make it reasonably suitable for occupation by a reasonable tenant who would be willing to rent it.*

This can be interpreted as meaning it is reasonable for a tenant to expect the building/complex to be safe and that the landlord takes the appropriate action to make it so. This could mean putting in better locks, implementing a better security system, putting in more lighting around the property, or evicting problem tenants

If you are living in a building that is unsafe you can

- document what specifically is unsafe. You should write down every incident including dates, times and witness names. Encourage anyone else in the building to do the same.
- write to the landlord stating what is unsafe, what you expect the landlord to do, and by when.
- if the landlord does not do anything to make the building safer go to the Residential Tenancy Branch to make an application for arbitration. An arbitrator can make an order requiring the landlord to do something such as better locks, more lighting, etc.

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# News from the Financial Wizards

## *Community Services Fund*

We have received new funding from the Ministry of Human Resources (ever heard of them?!) Community Services Fund. They fund projects that help people in East Vancouver build skills. So what does that mean for the Women's Centre? First, it means that the Learning Group is back. This was funded by the School Board but they pulled the funding – now we have a funder and this very popular group is running again. Second, it means that the Volunteer Coordinator position is now a full-time position. The volunteers will have their own full-time staff person to work with. It used to be that the volunteer coordinator was also responsible for organizing all the drop-in programming and doing the newsletter too. With a full time Volunteer Coordinator we will see improvements in how the Volunteer Program is run. And, speaking of improvements, we also received money to hire an outside person to come in and evaluate how the volunteer program is doing. That's right – we're actually going to have a formal evaluation and I'm sure that all of you will have plenty of valuable and constructive thing to say to help us improve.

## *New Logo and Centre Brochure*

Have you seen our new logo?! The four nations and the four directions are represented in this very beautiful new logo. Thanks to everyone that had input

into this. Also, keep your eyes open for our new Centre brochure – coming soon. All of this was made possible with a grant from the Law Foundation – thank you.

## *All Funders Meeting*

In January we invited all of our contract funders (government and the Law Foundation) to a meeting. This had never been done before. Usually, it's the funder that calls us to the meetings. It was a very good meeting with all but one funder attending. It was very interesting that everyone around the table was a woman. This would not have been the case 10 years ago. We talked about many things but the thing we really wanted to tell them about is how overcrowded and unsafe our drop-in can be now that we have so many women and so many health hazards to deal with (floods, pests, - well, I don't have to tell you - you know them all better than I do!) We told them that Bridge Housing will not be ready until the end of the year 2000 and that we cannot see staying in our present space for that long. We are in a really difficult situation because we also cannot afford to move and there is no perfect space just waiting for us. Some good suggestions came up and we are following up on them. Please feel free to ask for more details at the Women's Voice meeting or the Volunteer Meeting.

Take care, Alix and Drew

### **Farewell to a Friend**

*a dedication to Anne Daisy Wilson*

Safe journey to you my friend

So long for now gentle spirit

I'll see you another time

I knew you for a brief time

I listened and learned from you

I admired and respected you

and I drew from you examples of

kindness, wisdom and strength

I appreciated you...and I'll sure

miss you

I appreciated your candid forwardness

your courageous honesty and your open sensitivity

I miss you, my friend

It's hard to say goodbye because in my sadness, I

don't really want to

You left me a wonderful gift of

knowing you...and I will smile in my memories of  
you

And I am so glad that I shared my vision of you

My thoughts of you

for I am left with a sense of and

a knowing that my experience of you

is one without regrets

Safe journey and farewell, my friend

Christine Wood

*continued from page 6*

### **It is time to file your Income Tax**

#### **If you receive welfare ...**

It is the time of year to file your 1998 income tax return. Even if you did not receive income from paid employment, it is important to file your tax return as soon as possible, as this is how your GST eligibility is established. Also, you may be eligible for the \$50.00 provincial sales tax credit.

To file your tax return you will first need your T5 slip. This is a paper from the Ministry of Human Resources, (welfare) which shows how much money you received from them in 1998. If you have not received this paper, then request one from your financial aid worker.

If your 1998 income is from welfare only, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) has all the necessary forms and will help you fill out your tax return.

**You must bring your T5 with you.**

## **New to the Centre**

### **BATTERED WOMEN SUPPORT SERVICES**

Will be starting a 10 week session every Tuesday night starting March 2 at 5pm. There will be two new facilitators. If you have been affected by violence in your lives you may want to check it out.

### **MAKE OVERS**

Every Tuesday from 11am to 12:30pm there will be a volunteer here to do makeovers for women.

**There is a new Stopping the Violence worker replacing Deepa. Margaret Scott will be joining the staff at the Centre on March 4th, please make her feel welcome. She is a feminist with extensive experience in counselling, HIV/AIDS issues and dealing with women who have experienced violence. Margaret was previously employed at the Main Street STD Clinic. Drop in and say hello. Friday night groups and other STV programs will continue but there may be a break for Margaret to be oriented first.**