

# D.E.W. DROP IN

## Downtown Eastside Women Do Drop In

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

September 2000

Free

HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!



NEWS FROM OUR OUTREACH WORKER,  
MESHELL CORMIER!!!

### WHAT IS OUTREACH?

- When I am out on the streets I walk around connecting with women. I hand out condoms, the bad date sheet, take down bad date reports, provide information, act as a resources and most importantly provide information for women who are working the streets and/or living out on the streets.
- When I am at WISH drop in center my purpose for being there is somewhat similar, I am there to provide support, resources and information to the women. I am also available to meet with the women throughout the week during the day. By meeting with the women it can help provide them with an opportunity to figure out what they need and how they can get connected to various services that can help them.

### WHAT IS ACCOMPANIMENT/SUPPORT?

- I am available to accompany women to appointments with their doctors, to clinics, hospitals and support services dealing with health especially placing dealing with issues concerning HIV/AIDS ( ie: Positive Women's Network, Oaktree Clinic etc.)

## **SUPPORT GATHERING FOR WOMEN WHO ARE HIV/AIDS+**

Join us for good food, great conversations and company as each week we focus on different topics and issues concerning the daily lives of women who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

**WHERE:** D.A.M.S. 167 WEST PENDER ST.

**WHEN:** 12:30 to 3:30

**STARTING:** Friday September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000

**for more information call donna at 788-0387 or meshell at 728-7353**

### **more from meshell... ..**

Here with an update as to how my position as the women outreach worker is going. I thought I'd start out by explaining the hours I work and what I do during that time.

#### **tuesday**

1 – 6 pm a bit of street outreach during those hours and I am also available for an accompaniment.

6 – 10 pm at WISH drop in center doing outreach.

#### **wednesday**

8 – 5 pm outreach on the streets for a couple of hours during the day and I am available to do accompaniments throughout the day.

#### **thursday**

2 – 5 pm in the center

5 – 12 am go out and do outreach with paces on the streets.

#### **friday**

10 – 5 pm preparing for and co-facilitating a support group for women who are HIV+. It will be happening at DAMS from 12:30-3:00.

### **about education and referrals... ..**

For women who are interested in learning more about what HIV/AIDS come talk to me. I can provide information about prevention, protection, transmission, harm reduction, testing, medication, treatment and support. I also have lots of information on Hepatitis C and STD's. I have also been thinking about getting someone into the center once a month to answer any questions concerning health issues that may affect you or that you are just curious about. Come talk to me and let me know what you think about the idea and if you have any suggestion for topics.

### **about meshell's long term goal... ..**

The long-term goal of my position is HIV/AIDS prevention and support. By providing women with adequate information and tools (such condoms) this can help reduce the risk of getting the HIV virus. Obviously this is not enough but at least it's a starting point. The other component is support. For women who want to get tested for HIV or for those who have just found out that they have tested positive this can be a very time emotional and scary time. My job is to offer support, resources and accompany women to their appointments.

Letter from the 2000 – 2001 DEWC Steering Committee  
Also known as 'The Board'

*Hello! Cynthia here writing from the Steering Committee just to let you know what has been happening in the past 2 months at the SC level. Well the biggest deal is the BREAK IN, we are all shocked and furious that anyone would do that to the Centre, mostly because we were forced to close for 4 days as a result of the investigation! Our insurance will cover most of the lost items and the damage to the Centre but women could not receive services or food for those days and that was very sad and frustrating. Thankfully other agencies helped by having extended serving times and creating women only times and spaces. Yippee.*

*The SC has been very busy dealing with the impact of the break in on all aspects of the Centre, unfortunately because of the criminal nature of the event and the need for confidentiality details cannot be discussed. We just hope that Centre members continue to have trust and confidence that we are doing everything we can in the best interest of the Centre. The Security Committee has been meeting to make sure that this will never happen again, negotiations are happening with Central Residents to install a security gate at the entrance. We have a new, updated alarm system that is more suitable to our needs and we are consulting security experts to educate ourselves on how to make the Centre even more safe and to deal with the on going allegations of theft in the Centre.*

*Meanwhile.....*

*The Personnel Committee is very hard at work resolving ongoing issues and hiring for the positions of Programmer, additional Relief Staff and hunting for the very best Executive Director for the Centre. There are so many other things that the Personnel Committee is looking at from staff morale to staff holidays, evaluations and also complaints! Yikes.*

*We also have an active Social Action Committee! Viola spoke on behalf of the DEWC at the hearings for the inequities Aboriginal Women face as a result of the Indian Act. Lauren represents DEWC at Harm Reduction meetings. The voices of our members are being heard!*

*These are just SOME of the activities that are being undertaken by the Steering Committee. We are totally committed to working together for the good of the Centre. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak with any Steering member, we all try to drop in regularly. You can also send a message in writing to the Committee, we have a file in the Administration office. See you soon. Cynthia*

## **If you have been a Victim of A Crime, You may be eligible for Criminal Injury Compensation:**

### What is Criminal Injury Compensation?

Compensation is provided, within certain limits, for personal injury or death resulting from certain crimes within BC.

If you have been injured as a result of a crime or if you were an immediate family member of a person killed due to a crime, you may be entitled to compensation. To apply for compensation, there is no need for the offender to have been caught, but there must be a report to the police.

### Is There a Time Limit?

You must apply for compensation within one year of injury or death. This time limit may be extended if you send a letter explaining why you did not apply sooner. In cases of sexual assault or where the victim is a minor, there is no time limit.

### What Does Criminal Injury Compensation pay for?

- Medical and dental expenses, ambulance and hospital costs that are not paid under a medical, dental, or hospital plan
- Repairing or replacing clothing
- Repairing or replacing eye glasses, false teeth, hearing aids, etc.
- Pain and suffering for injuries
- Counselling costs for the victim, and in some cases, by members of the victim's family. This is provided so they can assist the victim in recovery and healing
- Loss of income
- Grief counselling and loss of earnings for immediate family members of deceased victims of crime.
- Funeral and burial or cremation expenses
- Loss of support for dependants
- Pain and suffering awards for workers who are criminally injured on the job

Compensation awards may be paid in one lump sum, or in the case of a disability, in the form of a pension.

The minimum lump sum award is \$100 and the maximum is \$50,000 in the case of the most serious injuries. A criminal injury claim may be reopened in future if a medical problem caused by the criminal injury flares up again.

Some examples of crimes covered for criminal injury compensation are murder, manslaughter, assault, sexual assault, robbery, and other offences involving child abuse and domestic violence.

### What Does Criminal Injury Compensation NOT Pay For?

- Stolen money or loss or damage to property
- Injuries received outside of BC
- Injuries to a person who is not an innocent victim and is responsible for the crime causing the injury
- Injuries occurring before July 2, 1972
- Legal fees or costs
- Injuries from motor vehicle accidents

### How Do I apply?

To apply for criminal injury compensation, complete and return an “Application for Benefits by Victim of Crime” form. You may get this form from the Victim Services Worker (Marlies in office B) who is also able to assist with completing the form, or you may also visit any other victim services agency or police.

### For More Information...

If you need more information you may contact Marlies Wester (Victim Services Worker) or phone the Criminal Injury Section @ 244-6400 or the Victims Information Line @ 1-800-563-0808.

Compiled by Marlies Wester

Source: Worker’s Compensation Board’s Pamphlet entitled, *Compensation for victims of crime*

**VANCOUVER FRINGE FESTIVAL  
IS PROUD TO PRESENT**

**"A DAY IN THE  
DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE"**

**Produced by Anita Kennedy and the Women's Centre  
Theatre Committee**

A portrayal of the everyday struggles of the women from Downtown Eastside Vancouver, who frequently use the Drop-In Centre. Anything can happen on the spur of the moment even with the roof literally caving in. The Drop-In Centre can be full of surprises whether they are dramatic or humorous.

Location: Gastown Actor's Studio (138 East Cordova)

Saturday, September 9, 7 pm  
Sunday, September 10, 7 pm  
Thursday, September 14, 2 pm  
Friday, September 15, 7 pm  
Saturday, September 16, 7 pm

**We will be organizing outings for women to see the play. Please check the sign-up sheets on the wall between Office D and Office E for more information. Hope to see you there!**

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### **Centre suffers from understaffing.**

You may have noticed that there have been a lot of understaffing problems at the Centre over the spring and summer. As a result, you sometimes have to wait a long time in order to see one of the workers here. Most of you have been really patient and understanding about this problem. But...recently I have felt targeted by verbal abuse by women waiting to see myself or other workers, implying that we are just not working hard enough, we don't know what we're doing etc. This does not help me work faster or harder and in fact, I will be refusing service to anyone who is unable to communicate respectfully to me, and I am encouraging other workers to do the same. If your requests are not being met quickly enough, please consider that it is not an issue of staff performance, but rather an issue of not enough workers and no funding to hire more workers. I encourage you to lobby your elected representatives regarding this issue:

Jenny Kwan, MLA,  
Vancouver Mount Pleasant  
#1070, 1641 Commercial Dr.  
Vancouver, BC  
V5L 3Y3  
Ph: 253-7905 Fax: 660-0672

Libby Davies, Member of Parliament,  
Vancouver East  
2412 Main St.  
Vancouver, BC  
V5T 3E2  
Ph: 775-5800 Fax: 775-5811

Joan Smallwood, Minister of Women's Equality  
10619 King George Highway  
Surrey, BC  
V3T 2X6  
Phone: 581-2797 Fax: 586 2742

In solidarity against poverty and oppression,  
Marg Scott  
Mental Health Advocate



# DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE

44 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1K2

Front Desk: 681 - 8480 Women's Line: 681-7458

**LUNCH SERVED  
DAILY AT 12:30**

**SEPTEMBER 2000**

## REGULAR PROGRAMMING

**Learning Group** - Every Monday, doors close at 5:15. Exploring different ways of Learning with elder, Bernice Hammersmith.

**Battered Women Support Services** on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30, support for women affected by violence in their lives. New group will start in mid-October.

The **Street Nurse** is here every Wednesday from 10:30 - 12:00 to give you information on all kinds of health issues.

**Popular Education Group** - Wednesday from 5:00 - 8:00, Share the skills that you have to make changes in your life. Meet with like-minded women to organize events.

**Women's Voice** - Every Thursday. 1:30. Let us know what you think about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed.

**Women Surviving Together** - Every Thursday, 5 pm. Healing Circle and support group for women. Facilitated by elder Reta Blind and Stopping the Violence Counselor, Carol Martin.

**Creative Writing Group** - Every Thursday, 5:50 pm. Metis performer & playwright, Marie Clements, offers her talents to women interested in creative writing. She will meet women at the Centre at 5:50 pm and walk over to Firehall Arts Centre (280 East Cordova) for the group.

**Support Gathering for Women who are HIV/AIDS+** - Every Friday, 12:30 - 3:30pm. Meshell and Donna (from DAMS) will be facilitating this group at DAMS (167 West Pender). Join us for good food, great conversations and company as we focus on different topics and issues concerning the daily lives of women who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

## ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS: Materials provided.

**Beading with Leona** - Every Monday, 1:30 pm. Learn how to bead, expand your skills or just share ideas.

**Fabric Arts with Freeda** - Every Friday morning, 10:30. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.

**Dreamcatchers** with Beverly, every Thursday at 1:30. Expand your skills and share stories with other women.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 10:30 Sewing and Alterations 12:30 - 3:30 HIV/AIDS+ Support Group at DAMS (167 West Pender St.)	2
3	4 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	5	6 10:30 Street Nurse 1:30 Canoeing for Volunteers 5:00 Popular Education	7 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Healing Circle 5:50 Creative Writing (Firehall Arts Centre, 280 East Cordova)	8 10:30 Sewing, etc. 12:30 - 3:30 HIV/AIDS+ Support Group at DAMS	9
10	11 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	12 5:00 Volunteer Orientation	13 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	14 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Healing Circle 5:50 Creative Writing (Firehall Arts Centre)	15 10:30 Sewing, etc. 12:30 - 3:30 HIV/AIDS+ Support Group at DAMS	16
17 5:00 Volunteer Orientation 7:30 Take Back the Night at Art Gallery	18 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	19 5:00 Volunteer Development	20 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	21 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Healing Circle 5:50 Creative Writing (Firehall Arts Centre)	22 10:30 Sewing, etc. 12:30 - 3:30 HIV/AIDS+ Support Group at DAMS	23
24	25 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group	26 5:00 Volunteer Development	27 <b>CHEQUE DAY</b> 1:30 Dreamcatchers 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	28 <b>CENTRE CLOSED FOR ALL-DAY STAFF MEETING</b>	29 10:30 Sewing, etc. 12:30 - 3:30 HIV/AIDS+ Support Group at DAMS	30 5:00 Volunteer Meeting

For outings in September, please check the notices posted on the wall between Office D and E for latest news. Due to the absence of a programmer, we apologize for the outing situation. Sign-up sheets are put up regularly, so do come by and check it out. Thank you for being understanding.



**Research to Identify Barriers to Women's Participation in Education Programs and  
Developing a 'Project Profile' or  
the Find out what kinds of Programs Women want Project**

It has been quite awhile since any information was reported back on the research project that was conducted last winter and in the spring. First of all I would like to thank all the agencies, groups and women who offered their time and stories with the researchers, Marie, Melissa and Susan. And of course to the dedicated researchers who worked very hard and long to make sure that as many voices, as possible would be heard. On behalf of the Coordinators and Advisory Committee, I would like to offer our sincerest apologies. The project has taken a little break over the summer and now we are ready to proceed with the next stage, which is check back with all the groups and agencies that participated. We will be having community meetings to report the findings and to get an idea how women would like the information used. We would also like to offer some suggestions on how to proceed and to listen to what women feeds to be done.

After this stage we will make changes to the report, if necessary and have the report printed and ready for distribution. This report may then be used for various situations such as; support documents for additional funding, a guide for agencies providing services and programs to women or as a reflection on women's experiences with 'educational' programs in the area. It has always been the goal that this information will actually lead to something meaningful. All those involved in the project remain committed to developing strategies for women that will actually make a difference in their lives. This is a long and slow process. I appreciate your patience and hope that you will continue to support. Watch out for posters and information for the check back sessions, which will happen in September and October. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

**Breaking the Silence  
Empowering Women as Organizers**

BTS is a coalition of neighbourhood groups, agencies and individuals in the Downtown Eastside who are committed to address the issue of violence in the neighbourhood. Specifically, focussing on the realities of women's lives. The coalition includes representatives from DEWC, Carnegie Centre and the Second Mile Society (Neighbourhood Helpers). BTS organizes direct action campaigns, forums, workshops, community meetings and other activities that confront the complex issues around violence against women in the DTES. Every year there is a retreat for women to come together for support and healing, this year the retreat will be held in November and the theme is 'Empowering Women as Organizers'. The retreat will offer a balance of healing activities as well as facilitated workshops to address the challenges that women face organizing in the DTES. Women who are actively involved in organizing in the DTES in unpaid and paid positions are encouraged to join. Prior to the retreat there will be community meetings to figure out what kinds of challenges people are having in their organizing efforts.

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# **Take Back the Night**

**7:30pm - Saturday September 16, 2000  
Vancouver Art Gallery (Georgia and Howe)**

**Women demand Safety**

**on our Streets and in public places**

**women-only protest**

**free child care – sign language interpretation –partially accessible**

**Organized as part of the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres  
World March 2000 Event**

**Call Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter to get involved: 872-8212**

## **Why Take Back the Night is a Women-Only Event:**

Women want a women-only event. Men are excluded from the rally and march because women want to know what it is like to do what men take for granted—take a safe walk on a public street at night without a male “protector”. Instead, women make each other safe by getting together, refusing to be isolated, refusing to give up the right to travel our streets in a safety and committing to helping each other in times of danger.

**Women should not have to rely on men to protect us from other men – we should simply have the freedom to walk about as we wish.** Men will sometimes be annoyed or angry that they are excluded from this one night of protest. It's predictable. Take Back the Night points out that men enjoy an unearned level of freedom. It's hard for men to acknowledge this because then they have to take some responsibility for the situation.

Men who want to demonstrate their support of women's hopes and demands for safety can do many things. For starters, don't insist on joining the rally and march for Take Back the Night. Instead, make it possible for woman or a group of women in your life to participate without you.

Some other things men can do: challenge your male friends when they tell sexist jokes or hit their wives/girlfriends, help them change their attitudes and behaviour about women, donate money to a progressive women's group.

For more information call

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter at 872-8212

## PROGRAMMING UPDATES

Creative Writing with Marie Clements has moved!

As of next Thursday, August 31, Marie will be hosting Creative Writing at the Firehall Arts Centre (280 E. Cordova). Women wishing to attend the course can come for supper at the Women's Centre at 5 pm, as usual, and Marie will come to meet you at 5:50 pm to walk over to the Firehall. If walking is a problem due to a disability, please phone at least 2 days in advance and an arrangement will be made to get you there. If you have any questions about the class, ask Marcella (in the office with blue door) or Marg (in the office with the yellow door)

Want to see a film from the Film Festival? Yes, it is true, it is true. We are going to get some tickets from the Vancouver International Film Festival. Watch out for sign-up sheets on the wall between Office D (Christine Hutchison's office) & E (the office with so many people coming in & out that it no longer belongs to anyone).

### **MAJOR RECRUITMENT!**

**We are recruiting volunteers for the Floorworker position.**

#### **Your responsibilities will be:**

Cleaning up the tables and chairs.

Sweeping and mopping the floors.

Directing women to the Staff Floorworkers for showers and laundry.

Being the "eyes" and "ears" of the Floor area.

#### **You can get the following benefits, just to list a few:**

Being a part of our Volunteer Team.

Going on Volunteer Outings.

London Drugs & Safeway Gift Certificates, Tobacco, Chocolate bars and Pop at the Volunteer Store.

Attend one of the Volunteer Orientations on September 12 (Tuesday) or 17 (Sunday) held at the Centre, 5 pm.

Sign-up with Denise Tang, Volunteer Coordinator.

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*A WARM WELCOME TO OUR  
NEW & RETURNING STAFF WOMEN!*

*Carol, our Stopping the Violence Counsellor.*

*Joyce, our Kitchen Assistant.*

*Sheila, our Floorworker.*

*I haven't been able to capture them on film yet. But wait for the coming issues!*

**Childcare for Evening Groups**

If you are attending an Evening Group and you need childcare, please give us 24 hour notice. To make sure we get your message, try any of the following:

**Talk to the staff responsible for that group directly.**

**Leave a message on the 681-4786 voicemail.**

**Leave a written note in the folder of the staff responsible for the group night. Folders are located on the office doors.**

If you would like to be on the Childcare list or if you have any questions, please talk to Marcella, our Administrator.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

**Interested in taking  
Emergency First Aid Basic Level Course?**

A Community Health Nurse, Vern, has kindly donated his services to the Centre. He will be teaching two courses for us.

October 5 For Centre Members

October 6 For Volunteers & Staff

Location & Time to be announced.

Sign up with Denise Tang, Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Skills Development Project Update**

I cannot believe that it's September already. This month you will notice two Volunteer Orientations. We are in dire need of Floorworkers. So let's get some enthusiastic new volunteers on the Floor!! We are also going to try two nights of Volunteer Development. There will be a meal, door prizes and fun scenarios for all Volunteers! The scenarios will be a great opportunity for us to do some training as well as have some fun. You will get a certificate at the end of these two nights. Jesse and myself will facilitate the sessions with much vigor.

Melanie (business partner of Pam's from The Facilitator Group) has been interviewing volunteers in the Centre and off-site. She is using the drop-in strategy and so far, it has been working well! So, keep an eye out for her, if you still haven't been interviewed.

**Volunteer Store Hours are as follows:**

**Sundays 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**

**Wednesdays (no change) 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm**

**On Volunteer Meeting days, we will open the store AFTER the meeting. We now got Safeway Gift Certificates as well as London Drugs ones for you to choose from.**

**And...are you interested in becoming a literacy tutor? Gerry Horne from the Laubach Literacy of Canada would like to train some volunteers to be literacy tutors. Talk to me if you are interested!**

I thought I would start this month with a note of appreciation. I think we always complain about what is going on in the Centre (me included, for sure) and we forget to say a simple thank you to each other. So...here it goes: **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF FOR HELPING OUT WHEN I WAS ON VACATION & ALL YOUR SUPPORT FOR THIS PROJECT.** Especially to Irene and Mary-Jane, who did a marvelous job as Acting Volunteer Co-coordinators. A note of thanks goes to Cynthia (for helping us out with Medicine Wheel), Benita and Lauren (for being on top of everything), Melanie (for being patient), Jesse (for valuable feedback & ideas), Marlene (for still hearing me whine after not working at the Centre), and of course, last but not least, Kao Ori (her new invention) for illustrations and being a great listener, and Leo for being a big-boned Leo.

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**A FRONT DESK VOLUNTEER'S "DREAM"**

Following last month's exercise on strengthening our bodies and souls,  
I believe we need another device to keep our hopes strong.  
Follow the dotted lines and cut the emblem out. Stick it on your body, sew it on  
your clothes, put it on your mirror. It will bring you tremendous luck and  
fortune. Afterall, the translation is: Good Health and Well-Being.

