

# D.E.W. DROP IN

**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN**

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

**APRIL 2001**

**FREE**



**INSIDE:**

**Volunteer Appreciation Week**

**The Residential School Memorial Project**

**Personal Stories-** a new column

~VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH~  
MARCH  
CANDACE SMZEDLI



"The women's centre was my home and my sanctuary when I first moved to Vancouver. I was all alone and didn't know anybody in the city. I had limited funds and was at a pretty messed up point in my life. I thank god for the women's centre every day, it has meant the world to me. When I was isolated, I met people. The centre helped fill some fundamental needs and as a volunteer I have been able to contribute back to the centre and to the community".

Candace became a volunteer in 1997. The centre continues to be a regular stop off point for her and she contributes about 15 hours a month working both on the floor and in the kitchen. When she's not at the centre, Candace can be found reading, riding her bike or at the beach. Candace LOVES the beach.

# Volunteer Appreciation Week

Volunteer Appreciation Day  
April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Volunteers get ready to be pampered by the staff, who want to say an enormous thank you for all your hard work, commitment, advice, and support. The Centre could not function without you for a minute!!! YIPEEE for Volunteers!!



# **Healing from the Legacy of Residential Schools**

**The topic of Residential Schools is a difficult and painful one. Reading the following may cause raise some hurtful emotions. At the Women's Centre, we have two excellent First Nations counsellors who are here to support you. Reta Blind and Carol Martin are in Office F- please feel free to drop by their office for counselling, and referrals.**

**The following is a summary from a draft letter by Phil Jane Jr. regarding the full resolution of the Intergenerational Hurt and Shame of Residential Schools by the Four Worlds International Institute in Lethbridge, Alta.**

**"As we know, the imposition of the residential school system on Canada's Aboriginal People was a grave historical injustice committed by the very Government and Christian Religious Authorities responsible for taking care of our best interests. The goal of the Government and Churches was to literally wipe out our tribal cultures from the face of Mother Earth, making the residential school claims unlike any other Canada has ever seen... The Government and Church imposed system caused life long damages to most residential school survivors... In this healing process, involving all Canadians, Aboriginal peoples deserve nothing short of complete public exposure, acknowledgement and reconciliation of this national crime."**

**The letter also expresses a general concern as to what is covered under the Government's compensation. Currently the government will compensate for "legally recognized wrongs", which includes breach of fiduciary journey, trespass to person, intentional infliction of emotional shock, physical and emotional trauma, physical and sexual assault, and wrongful confinement. However, things like failure to properly educate, cultural abuse and loss of language, and the breach of treaties are not categorized as "legally recognized wrongs" but also need to be considered.**

**The letter talks about the need for more than monetary compensation. It says that the Government and Church need to provide a forum to bring all aspects of residential school abuse to light. Ensuring that Canadian children learn about Residential Schools in their education is also important. These things will help to change Canadian attitudes, and especially those who have been misinformed about the school's devastating impact on First Nation communities.**

What is going on in our community?

### **The Residential School Memorial Project**

To honour Residential School survivors in British Columbia, there will be a permanent memorial plaque placed in the Chief Simon Baker room at the Vancouver Friendship Centre. There are opportunities to add your name or family member's name to the plaque. Please phone or fax your name, the name of the Residential School that you attended and what year or years you attended the school. This project aims at supporting other communities throughout B.C. create their own Residential School support system. Phone Gail Lewis, Coordinator of the Residential School Memorial Project at (604) 251-4844 ext. # 331 for more information.

### **An amazing local story**

Victoria Folster, of the Key Reserve in Saskatchewan, is a long time member of the Women's Centre. She was recently in Palm Beach, Florida's local newspaper (see photo!) because of the joyful reunion with her daughter, who she lost 25 years ago, has connected with her through the Internet, personal contacts and luck. Victoria has just returned from Florida after a month of visiting with her daughter Sharon Ganoe, her two sons Nicky 9 and Brad 8, and husband Bill.



Victoria was taken away from her parents in grade one and placed in Residential School. Apart of a broader movement to “take the Indian out of the Indian”, Victoria experienced the terrifying and difficult circumstances of residential schools, alongside thousands of other First Nations children, that were common in the 1950s-1970s, for the purpose of assimilating children into the mainstream white culture. This horrible experience was repeated with her own children when they were taken away by child welfare authorities. Sharon’s first experience with foster care was terrible, but her second in Denver, Colorado was much better, though she grew up without knowledge of her First Nations heritage and family due to confidentiality laws.

Victoria has reconnected with both her children, Sharon and Laurie. After 25 years, Victoria is now a mother and grandmother, and still can’t quite believe how the reunion has changed her life! In the newspaper article, Victoria is quoted as saying ““I’ve never been called grandma before... I used to envy people who had children and grandchildren, especially around the holidays. That was a real tough time for me. Even right now I still can’t believe. I still have to look around.”

April 23-29<sup>th</sup>, Prevention  
of Violence Against  
Women Week.

The Women’s Centre will  
be hosting various  
workshops, videos, creating  
your own t-shirts, and  
other activities as collective  
action to raise awareness  
and prevent violence  
against women.

# HOUSING PROBLEMS?

## For Tenants Only

- > Do You Live in Social/Subsidized Housing?
- > Are You Fed-Up with How it is Run?
- > Want to Work with other Tenants to Make Changes?

Come to the  
**Social Housing Forum**  
Monday April 9<sup>th</sup>  
11am-2pm  
Carnegie Centre (Theatre)  
Snacks provided.

### Panel Discussion with:

- > Tenants Rights Action Coalition (TRAC)
- > BC Human Rights Commission
- > Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- > Tenants Association

For More Information call: Alice Kendall 681-4786 or  
June Clearsky 688-1821

Sponsored by: Downtown Eastside Women's Centre & United Native Nations

# 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**

**APRIL 2001**

## REGULAR PROGRAMMING

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

**Battered Women Support Services (BWSS)** will resume on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30 on April 17. This group offers support for women affected by violence in their lives.

**End Legislated Poverty-Organizers Training (ELP)** alternates with BWSS on Tuesday nights. Learn to facilitate and organize anti-poverty activists, rallies, and develop political strategies around various poverty issues.

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. Note this group will be closed for March.

**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. A new session of **Still Movement** begins April 19<sup>th</sup>, it is a closed group, and takes place before the Healing Circle.

**Creative Writing Group** - Every Tuesday, 6 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.

## ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS: Materials provided.

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

**Clay Works** - Every Tuesday, 2:30pm with Heidi. Get your hands creating pottery and other wild things!

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

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 1:30 Beading	3 2:30 Clay Studio 5:50 Creative Writing Group	4 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	5 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing (Fraser River) 5:00 Still Movement/Healing Circle	6 10:30 Sewing etc.	7 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
8	9 1:30 Beading	10 2:30 Clay Studio 3:00 Dental Hygenist Visit 5:50 Creative Writing Group	11 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	12 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing (Deep Cove) 5:00 Still Movement/Healing Circle	13 10:30 Sewing etc.	14 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
15	16 1:30 Beading	17 <b>1:00 Volunteer Appreciation Day- Centre Closed</b> 5:00 BWSS 5:50 Creative Writing Group	18 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	19 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing (TBA) PM: Still Movement (new!) 5:00 Healing Circle	20 10:30 Sewing etc	21 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
22 <b>SPRING BREAK</b>	23 1:30 Beading 5:00 Learning Group (last session)	24 2:30 Clay Studio 5:00 BWSS 5:50 Creative Writing Group	25 <b>Cheque Day</b> 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	26 <b>Centre Closed for All-Day Staff Meeting</b>	27 10:30 Sewing, etc. 2:00 Outing (Art Exhibit)	28 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
29	30 1:30 Beading					



# **No Means No: Campaigning Against Sexual Assault**

## **(Taken from the Canadian Federation of Students Fact Sheet)**

Violence against women is a significant problem in Canada, that both women and men have a responsibility in preventing acts of violence. Rape is often seen as a women's issue, but everyone should encourage each other to respect the right of women to decide if, how, when, and with whom they have sex.

In rape, sex is not the end– it is the means. Sex is used as a tool to demean and degrade women, and it works. Rape is about power, not sex.

Violence against women, including date rape, still accounts for the majority of violent crimes in our society. According to a 1997 Crime Statistics Report by Statistics Canada, male on female violence accounts for 48% of all violent crime in Canada. Stats Canada has also found (in 1993) that one in three women were victims of sexual assault and one in four women were victims of assault by a spouse or partner.

Women are most at risk when they are with a man that they know. The 1997 Crime Statistics Report by Stats Canada reported that 87% of reported cases of male against female violence, the women knew their assailants. In 46% of the reports, the woman was assaulted by her spouse.

Drugs have been used to facilitate sexual assault for a long time, with alcohol and marijuana being the most commonly used drugs. Since the late

1990s, there has been growing concern about the use of other drugs in acts of sexual violence. Recently the most common drug associated with drug-facilitated sexual assaults has been Lorazepam.

It is hard to detect the incidence of drug induced rape. Often slipped into a drink, it can be impossible to tell as these drugs tend to be odorless, tasteless, and colourless. The effects of these drugs include: blackouts, disorientation, and memory loss, and victims are often unable to recount the details of a sexual assault or encounter. In this drugged state, women are unable to protect herself from sexual assault.

The street names for some of these drugs are mind erasers, party poopers, liquid ecstasy, special k or roofies. These drugs are also known as Valium, Librium, Rohypnol, GHB (Gamma-Hydroxybutyrate), Rohypnol, Chloral Hydrate, Ketamine, GBL (Gamma-Butyrolactone), many of which are illegal in Canada.

The RCMP are starting to take these drugs more seriously, after a couple of major seizures of Rohypnol in January 1999 in North Vancouver, and GHB in Kelowna. These seizures indicate that they are acknowledged by law enforcement officers of the criminal presence of rape drugs in Canada.

We need to go further however. Stereotypes and myths continue to surface in Canada's courtrooms and in the minds of our nation's citizens. The No means No Campaign is an opportunity to raise the issue of violence against women and change the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that allow violence to continue at the individual and societal level.

Get involved, and come out for the workshops and videos during the week of April 23-29<sup>th</sup>!! For more information please see Carol Martin in Office F, our Stopping the Violence Counsellor.

# WHAT'S ON AT DAMS?

## **Creating Community: Moving from Isolation to Connection**

A weekly gathering of women creating community and exploring themes of isolation and connection through art.

At DAMS: 167 West Pender St.

Eight Tuesdays, 12:30 to 3:00 pm  
May 15 to July 3, 2001

**Light lunch included**

To sign up for this group  
Call Donna or Katrina  
At 687-5454

## **Women's Yoga Group At D.A.M.S.**

Free weekly gentle yoga

where: 167 West Pender St.  
(Between Abbott & Cambie)

when: Every Monday  
STARTING APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2001  
1:00-2:30 pm

Please wear comfortable clothes &  
do not eat one hour before class



**For more information  
call Katrina at 687-5454**

## A Goodbye Letter From The Outreach Worker:

So this is my goodbye letter to all the women, volunteers and staff of the Downtown Eastside Women Center. I think this is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do since I started here. I have been involved with the Women Center in one way or another since 1997. As I leave this job, I am reminded of all the great stories, memories and experiences that have found their way deep into my heart. I would like to sincerely thank all the members of the center who continue to inspire me with their ongoing strength, courage and determination to heal not only themselves but this community. I would also like to express my respect and admiration for all the hard working volunteers whose commitment and devotion has kept this place running. You are all truly the backbone of this agency. Lastly I would like to thank the staff who have been extremely helpful and patient throughout my learning process (which has never stooped) while working here. We have been through a lot together. I truly appreciate all the openness; insight, moral support, friendship and love you have all extended to me. You are a hard working bunch ... but do not forget to take breaks (are you hearing me Alice).

The Women Center is truly an amazing place. I am not saying this place doesn't have its fair share of conflicts because believe me I have seen it all. But at the same time this is also a place where I have witnessed a tremendous amount of compassion, empowerment, healing and change. I am excited to see all the new and positive changes that will take place with moving into a brand new place. I pray that this transition will be like a fresh new start for every involved.

So my new job is at D.A.M.S which is an Alcohol and Drug support service for women. It's located at 119 W. Pender St so I will still be around the neighbourhood. I was hired on as the outreach worker there. I'll be doing the same stuff I was doing here. So if women want to connect with me you can call me on my cell at . I'll still pop in here every once in a while (its hard not to still be a part of this place) Good luck in the future.

In Solidarity,

Meshell xoxo



## **Personal Stories: Real Voice from the Women's Centre**

### **Good Morning Vietnam**

Sitting there in the trenches, Bobbie turned to me one morning and asked "Is this the day I die?" , just as another shell exploded inches from our trench. I replied, "We never know when it's our time. All we know is how to survive in this God forsaken hell hole."

This was the last time I was to see my buddy, for as she went to bring in some bodies a mortar shell cut her life short. For this was her morning, not mine.

You see Bobbie and I were two nurses brought over to Vietnam from the United States together. We had in those two short years taken our leaves together and went out in the field to retrieve our men together. Now I must be face this last task alone. Putting Bobbie's body back together, bagging and tagging it, and then having a Captain back home notify her parents. Bobbie had just turned 20 today when she died November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1970. This is the poem I wrote to her:

### **Good Morning Vietnam.**

Hey everyone were still here today  
The fog is lifting  
The sky is clear and bright  
Rat-a-tat-tat-, zzzzzz K Boom,  
As Bobbie go for a fallen comrad  
Now she is here, now she's gone.  
Where is the sanity in this calamity?  
Where are the troops?  
Is there a God out there?  
Nobody knows except Bobbie,  
Looking down at us in our time of despair,  
She must be content with her place at God's right hand,  
She must be feeling the pain we're in,  
And saying to us all,

“Good Morning Vietnam. This is Bobbie in Heaven saying  
God speed you all in your victories.”

Nurse:

Rank: First Lieutenant  
Name: Linda Lee Boyle  
Dodtag#: 17785

To all the women in the Women's Centre. This is the real Linda that nobody knew about.  
This is why I am unstable with my mood swings. Please try to be patient as I am now getting  
treatment for this and hope to become a better friend and advisor to you all.

Thank you.

We are moving to a new building in about a month's time (the new date is somewhere in  
early May). So the Editor of the newsletter asked women to reflect on what this present  
building and place meant to women who use the Centre. Here is what one woman wrote:

#### **What did 44 E. Cordova mean to me?**

9 years ago wow. It's been good. I remember the first time I came in. I stood b y the door and  
the receptionist said come on in. Ironically I ran out the door. Eventually I got used to  
everything being free. Within months I was washing dishes. I've done everything in the  
centre, various volunteer positions, outings, retreats. I even got brave enough to bug, bug,  
bug the staff. Ha, Ha!

Joanne Shapwaykeesie

**\*\*\*Important HEALTH Announcement\*\*\***

**DRUG RECALL:** CVS has removed all products containing this chemical from their shelves. Please be very aware of the ingredient Phenylpropylamine. It has been linked to increased hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding in the brain) among women ages 18-49 in the three days after starting use of medication. Problems were not found in men, but the Federal Drug Association (FDA) recommended that everyone (even children) seek alternative medicine.

Here are a few of the main medications that contain **Phenylpropylamine:**

**Alka-Seltzer Plus** *Children's Cold Medicine, Cold Medicine, Cold Medicine Original, Cold & Cough Medicine Effervescent (and other Alka-Seltzer Plus products)*

**Dimetapp:** *Cold & Allergy Chewable Tablets, Cold & Cough Liqui-Gels, Dm Cold & Cough Elizir, Elixer (and other Dimetapp products)*

**Triaminic:** *DM Cough Relief, ExpectorANT Chest and Head Congestion, Syrup Cold & Allergy, Triaminicol Cold & Cough.*

**Tylenol Sinus, Supplements, Acutrim Maximum Strength Appetite Control, Acutrim Diet Gum Appetite Suppressant Plus Dairy, and many Dexatrim Products**