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# D.E.W. DROP IN

**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN**

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

**JULY 2001**

**FREE**



**INSIDE:**

**National Aboriginal Day- Photos and Events!**

**Volunteer Retreat at Loon Lake- Stories**

**Transit Strike- Update on the Current Situation**

**Volunteer of the Month**

**Summer Camping and Healing Gatherings!**

## National Aboriginal Day, June 21<sup>st</sup>

To honour the traditions of West and East First Nations cultures, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre hosted a special feast for over 400 women on June 21<sup>st</sup>! The day was spectacular, with staff and volunteers working extraordinarily hard to cook salmon, bannock, and chopping fruit for the strong women of our community. An enormous thank you to Debbie Lincoln, who was the key organizer, for sharing her love and energy with us all! Highlights of the day were a beautiful song from a young girl, a visit by indigenous women from Australia, who sang us a hunting and dream song, a group of drummers from the East, and a performance by the Still Movement group!





Special thank you to Reta Blind, who played a special role in the organizing of the day, and to the two men who honoured women by drumming them into the Centre. All the amazing work in the Kitchen was done by Vera, Cathy, and a large group of dedicated volunteers. And our thanks to Alice and Christine for putting up all the beautiful photographs. The Centre is beginning to look like home!



## PROGRAMMING UPDATE

### Camping Trips

The Women's Centre is partaking in three camping trips/healing gatherings this summer. The closest trip on the horizon is the annual Lytton Healing Gathering, which takes place at Pusulko Lake on July 17-19<sup>th</sup>! We will be heading up to Lytton for two nights, to participate in healing sweats, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, and camping! In order to attend, you must first sign up (sign up sheet is presently full) on the Outing Board and then attend two mandatory meetings on Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup> at 11am, and Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> at 11am. We have room for 8 volunteers and 12 members. Sign up sheets for the Mission Medicine Wheel in August (16-18<sup>th</sup>) will be posted in mid July. Keep an eye out for these opportunities! The BC Elder's Gathering list is currently full. However, check in with Jennifer to see if there is last minute space.

A fall camping trip will be organized for September, and an alternative healing retreat in October. Priority for the retreat will be given to those who did not have the chance to go on any of the summer or fall camping trips.

### Summer Workshops

A *Video and Documentary Workshop* will run in July for three weeks. Jaqueline Levitin will run a workshop that will teach women how to use a video camera, and the process of making a documentary film. These workshops will run Monday and Fridays from 2-5pm, beginning July 13<sup>th</sup>.

The *Women's Centre Library project* will begin in mid to late July and will be facilitated by Janice Cramer. This project will involve any woman who uses the Centre, who is interested in participating in the selection of books and resources for our potential library. While the purchasing of books may not begin until the fall, we would like to compile a list of resources that have been decided upon by women who use the Centre in order to get the library running by late fall.

## Summer Events

The Women's Centre has been given tickets for the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, taking place July 13-15<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to attend the festival, please sign up with Jennifer. A staff member will be meeting women at the festival with their tickets.

## Newsletter Committee ☺

The new computer lab will be running in August, equipped with word processing programs, and access to the internet. All women in the Centre will have access to this room in order to compile resumes, write letters, and use the internet for email or accessing information! The computer lab will also be used by our new NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE, that will hopefully be working together by late summer. The current editor is looking for highly motivated volunteers who are interested in writing, journalism, editing, graphics, and art to form the first ever Newsletter Committee. The Newsletter Committee will take over the production of the newsletter, making it more in tune with the daily issues of women living in the Downtown Eastside. There will be opportunities to:

- Attend community events and write articles
- Creatively design newsletter layout
- Learn computer programs (Pagemaker, Microsoft Word, Corel Draw) and use of Scanner
- Develop Graphics and Design
- Leadership skills in peer-education and production organizing

The current editor is looking for three women who are interested in learning new skills, and being involved in an ever-changing yet satisfying creative project! Please see Jennifer for more details.

The Annual Volunteer Retreat at Loon Lake, 2001  
Stories from our Adventurous Volunteers!

I got to the outing at Look Lake. We did this opening prayer at the Fire Pit which was really "cool". But The Invisibel Red-Headed Woodpecker kept bugging me by pecking in the trees. It seemed everywhere I went he was close by pecking and pecking until it was driving me crazy. But I think that just because my partner's Indian name was Red-Headed Woodpecker he is trying to leave me a message or he is trying to talk to me. What was really "cool" was the Scavenger Hunt. Everybody was running around trying to find 10 things. That was really fun and I found this big three pronged stick. Everybody was laughing and having a good time just being down by the lake. It was very peaceful, and the lake looked like a mirror so that is my story about Loon Lake.

Betty Williams, June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001

"I SURVIVED"

1. First Night we sat around the fire pit and sang some colour songs, and marshed those mellows.
2. We took the pulley to the other side of the lake. We walked through the forest path. Someone behind me was singing "O Canada..." Yeah OK, I thought, teach those bears the national anthem!
3. Me and Denny wone the Scavenger Hunt (Prize= 10 points=Yahoo!). We saw "Chip N' Dales" in the forest.
4. Cec "n" Jen read us stories. Yep, they really did! Honest! Some were very, very funny. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Hee! Hee! Hee! Ho! Ho! Ho!

P.S. FOOD WAS GREAT!



Joanne SHARWAY KEESIC



# VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

## JUNE

Eva Kovacs



Eva started volunteering at the Women's Centre because she needed something to do, and found that she had time to volunteer. She was interested in the Women's Centre and wanted to learn more about what the place had to offer. Eva is a single mother of two boys (above!). She has been a single parent for eleven years. Her hobbies include sewing, cooking, and swimming. Eva has volunteered for two years at the Women's Centre and has done pretty much every job there is to do, from working in the kitchen to keeping track of the volunteer store. Volunteering is a rewarding experience for Eva, as she enjoys helping women by being there not to solve problems, but listening to women when they need the ear. Eva is a highly respected volunteer, who has been a wonderful part of the volunteer team! Thank you Eva, for all your incredible dedication to the Women's Centre!

# DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE

302 Columbia Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 4J1

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

**LUNCH SERVED  
DAILY AT 12:30**

**JULY 2001**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 1:30 Beading 5:00 ELP	3 1:30 Still Movement 5:00 BWSS	4 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	5 11:00 Outing (all day) 1:30 Still Movement 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 Healing Circle	6 10:30 Sewing etc. 1:30 Raffle	7 1:30 Dreamcatchers
8	9 1:30 Beading ELP 5:00	10 1:30 Still Movement	11 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Popular Education	12 1:30 Still Movement 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing 5:00 Healing Circle	13 10:30 Sewing etc. 1:30 Raffle	14 1:30 Dreamcatchers
15	16 1:30 Beading 5:00 ELP	17 1:30 Still Movement	18 10:30 Street Nurse 5:00 Pop. Ed.	19 1:30 Still Movement 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 Healing Circle	20 10:30 Sewing etc 1:30 Raffle	21 1:30 Dreamcatchers
22	23 1:30 Beading 5:00 ELP	24 1:30 Still Movement	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. 1:30 Raffle 6:00 MUSIC JAM with Marg!	28 1:30 Dreamcatchers
29	30 1:30 Beading 5:00 ELP	31				

## REGULAR PROGRAMMING

**Learning Group** – Currently on hold, until a new facilitator/teacher is found. Hope to be running by August.  
**Battered Women Support Services (BWSS)** continues on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30. This group offers support for women affected by violence in their lives.

**End Legislated Poverty-Organizers Training (ELP)** takes place on Tuesday nights (new session begins July 2). Learn to facilitate and organize anti-poverty activists, rallies, and develop political strategies around various poverty issues. Group to be running soon.

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. **Still Movement**, a six-week closed healing course, will be held on Tues/Thurs afternoons (1:30-3:30pm). A new session begins on June 14.<sup>th</sup>

**Creative Writing Group** – Every Tuesday, 6 pm and will resume in June (Date to be announced). 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, however we are looking for a new facilitator. 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.



## **CHOICES: A Pre-Employment Training Program!**

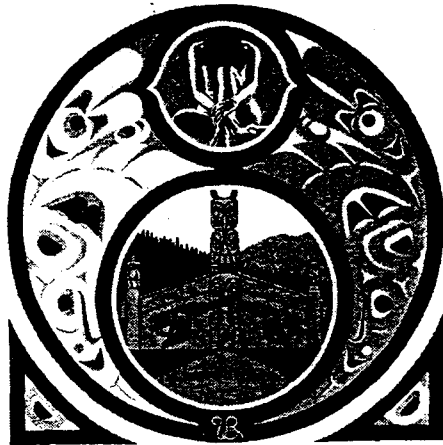
The Women's Centre has been pleased to have had two excellent practicum students, through *Helping Spirit Lodge Society's Choices Pre-employment and Bridging Program*. Last month the newsletter featured the New Start pre-employment training program. This month, I will provide some information on the Choices program. The Mission Statement of the program is "To provide a foundation for first Nations' Women to enter the workplace in mainstream society by: creating a bridge to further education, skills training and/or employment. To develop positive self-esteem through education on First Nation's culture and the history of Canada's relationship with First Nation's people. To provide education to women on family violence issues in a safe and supportive environment."

### **Who can apply?**

You can apply if you are a First Nations woman over 19 years of age, who is committed to building a healthy lifestyle, and is on income assistance.

**Helping Spirit Lodge Society**

## **CHOICES**



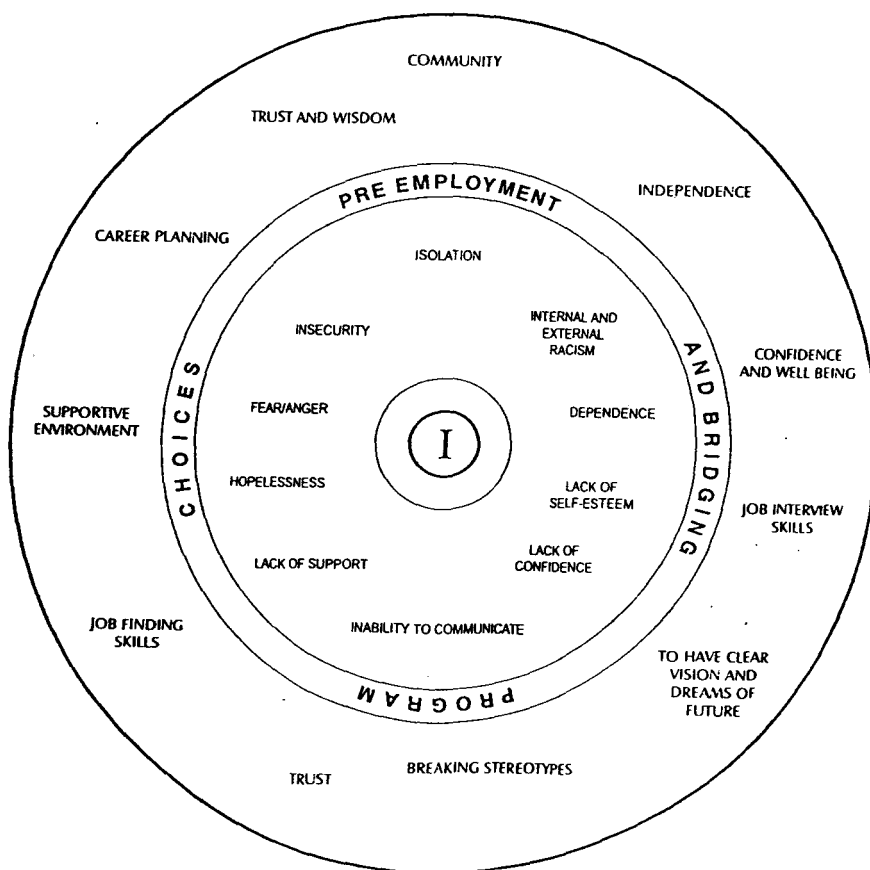
### **What are the benefits of the Choices Program?**

You can receive one-to one counselling, join the Spirit Women's Healing Circle, access the food bank, obtain a free bus pass, receive clothing allowances and donations, plus lunch is provided!

### **How long is the program?**

The program is 20 weeks long.

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### What do I do during the program?

The program offers: personal growth development, domestic violence workshops, career and educational planning, financial planning, practicum placements, computer orientation, adult upgrading and assessment, karate, traditional crafts and sewing, First Nations role models and more!

### How do I apply?

1. Call Helping Spirit Lodge Society : (604) 872-6649
2. Application and assesment
3. Participate in a Counseling Session
4. Participate in Spirit Women's Healing Circle
5. Begin on the first Intake Date.

If you have any further questions, please see the Women's Centre's Volunteer Coordinator, Cecily Nicholson who is at the Centre Sundays-Wednesdays.

## WOMEN'S CENTRE: Policy and Procedure Updates

### CLOTHING ROOM AND LAUNDRY

For the time being, there will be no access to the clothing or laundry room on the weekends. This is due to a shortage of staff on the floor, relative to the bigger space, and larger numbers of women attending the Women's Centre. The clothing room is one of the most significant sources of conflict in the Centre, so to enhance the safety of all volunteers and members we have taken this interim measure. We hope that you can understand this current situation as we adjust to a new Centre, with new circumstances. Thank you for your patience with this matter.



**MEAL TIMES:** Please help us out!

Once you have finished with your cutlery, cups, and plates/bowls, the Staff of the Women's Centre ask that you help our floor and kitchen staff by putting them in the appropriate dish containers located near the kitchen door once you are finished. The more that you help the floorstaff with this very simple gesture, the better they will be able to answer your questions, and take more focussed time with basic referrals to other services the Women's Centre or other organizations offer. Thank you for your help!

# Community Events



Current speakers scheduled (tentative):

- A PERFORMANCE by Persimmon Blackbridge from Vancouver, Canada • Psychiatric survivor, author, and artist.
- Laurie Ahern and Judi Chamberlin from Lawrence, MA, USA • psychiatric survivor activists.
- Hagai Aviel from Israel • Israeli Association Against Psychiatric Assault.
- Kevin Fitts of Portland, Oregon • Psychiatric survivor, and Director of Oregon Office of Consumer Technical Assistance.
- Cassandra Freeman from Vancouver • Vancouver Richmond Mental Health Network.
- Katherine Hodges from Chicago, USA • Founder of MAD LIB of Chicago, Illinois.
- Iris Helling from Germany • A worker in a psychiatric survivor Runaway House.
- Karl Bach Jensen from Denmark • World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry.
- Gary Long from Vancouver • mental health advocate.
- Loren Mosher from San Diego, USA • Psychiatrist for Soteria Associates Mental Health Services.
- David Oaks - Eugene, USA • Director of Support Coalition International from Eugene, Oregon.
- Phillip J. Schulman, Mental Health Div. of Virgin Islands • Psychiatric survivor, minister and founder of Advocates for Humanity.
- Irit Shimrat from Vancouver, Canada • Founder, Lunatics Liberation Front.
- Anita Stevens from Vancouver • Psychiatric survivor and poet.
- Rene Talbot of Berlin Germany • Irren-Offensive, an SCI Sponsor.

\* Group name for identification only

for more information

**www.MindFreedom.org**

**Sunday  
July 22  
3pm to 5pm**

**PROTEST**  
**Globalization  
of Psychiatric  
Human Rights  
Violations!**

In front of the  
Vancouver  
Convention Center.

A free nonviolent legal  
public education event.  
Sponsored by  
Support Coalition  
International.

Creative street theatre and puppets are encouraged to protest the global spread of coerced psychiatric drugging, electroshock and other human rights violations.

Help educate the public about the new World Bank mental health division, which is promoting a "template" they've helped create of how the "mental health" system should be built in developing nations. The World Federation for Mental Health is the main public link to the World Bank's new global mental health plan. The protest is timed to reach those entering the opening event of the week-long WFMH World Congress.

Unite with other Mad Pride events in Germany, UK and USA! For more info on Mad Pride events, including choices for feeding while in Vancouver see the SCI web site:

**www.mindfreedom.org**

Support Coalition  
International  
434 Willemette, Suite 216  
Eugene, OR 97401  
ph: (541) 345-9105  
fax: (541) 345-3737  
e-mail:  
office@MindFreedom.org

## **TRANSIT STRIKE: BACKGROUND**

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 over 3,000 members of the Office and Professional Employee's International Union (OPEI) and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) working for the Coast Mountain Bus Company and Translink walked off the job. Contracts for the OPEIU expired on March 31<sup>st</sup>. These workers include bus drivers, traffic checkers, security workers, and mechanics among others.

The main issues that have not been agreed by either the Unions or the Coast Mountain Bus Company include:

- Part-time Work
- Contracting Out

However, a recent report by mediator Vince Ready has suggested that transit workers could return to work by agreeing to a 8.5% wage increase over three years. The difficult points above should be referred to a special committee and solved within the next year. If these points are not solved within the next year, the issues could be solved by mediated arbitration. The two unions have agreed to accept the report's terms, and could be back on the job as early as Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. However, both parties met on June 20<sup>th</sup>, and no settlement was found. Coast Mountain Bus Company is refusing to budge on any of their points. Hence we have officially reached day 94 of the strike, which was the total number of strike days during the last major transit strike of 1984, when workers were legislated back to work.

(Taken from a Press Release, June 21<sup>st</sup>, by the OPEIU Union at Joyce Station)

The Bus Strike has affected the Women's Centre in many ways. Women that live further than a few blocks away, have had difficulty making it down to the Women's Centre to see advocates and access meals and counselling. Many women have had difficulty attending their appointments at doctor's offices, or accessing various medications. Mums with children have had a very difficult time getting food, childcare, support, and attending various appointments. Volunteers have had difficulty making it down for their various shifts. It is actually amazing how many volunteers are able to make their shifts, given the enormous obstacles of non-existent transportation.

"GAS TOWN BLEAKNESS"

She walked amid The dirty streets,  
and bumped against The sorrow  
She heard The Throbbing of The fear and violence  
and felt Their hopelessness.  
She saw the sadness behind their eyes,  
and heard denial upon their lips.

The tired whores were humming  
The broken pimps were laughing,  
and all the drunks were making plans of  
tomorrow's fortune yet to come.  
The cons were smiling sweetly, as Their  
souls were slowly dying.

Young boys with care free swagger,  
hid their fears behind obscenities  
and she herself who saw and heard,  
their bitter shame and pain was broken  
also by the winds of time  
so very long ago.

June '84

by SHAREN BUTTERWORTH

# Welcome 2001-2002 Board of Directors

Benita Bunjun  
Ann Marie Clark  
Erin Graham  
Audrey Huntley  
Daisy Kler  
Eileen Lafferty  
Debbie Lincoln  
Gwyn McIntosh  
Cara Moody  
Gwen Nelson  
Jo-Anne Ross  
Irene Thomas

## How can I get involved?

The Women's Centre provides a set time and place for women to be involved in the decision making process. "Women's Voice" is a weekly forum (Thursday, 1:30pm) for women to raise their concerns and suggestions on issues relating to the organizing, and running of the Women's Centre. Women's Voice has a representative on the Steering Committee. Decisions at Women's Voice will be placed on the Steering Committee's agenda by the Women's Voice Representative. Please ask a staff member, if you have any further questions.