

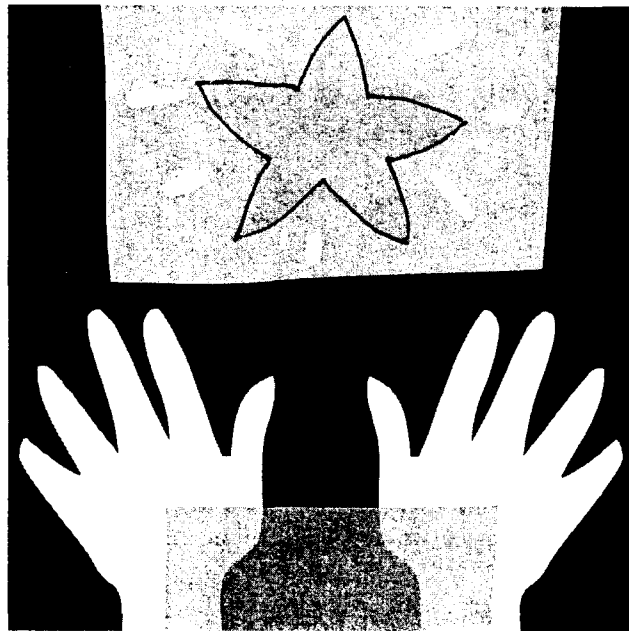
D.E.W. DROP IN

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

JANUARY 2002

FREE



NEW BEGINNINGS....

INSIDE:

Upcoming events: Tenants' Rights, Bus Rider's Union and Food Forums

A New Year: To long for our dreams

Hello from our new Mental Health Advocate: Erin Graham

FOOD HAMPERS

Food Hampers will be distributed by the Women's Centre on *Saturday, January 5th at 2 pm*. The Centre provides Food Hampers to help women get through one of the longest stretches between Check Issue days, which this month is 6 weeks. You do not need tickets in order to receive a hamper.

On a cautionary note, the Centre may not have enough hampers to give to everyone who arrives. Hampers will be given out

ELDERS and MOTHERS with CHILDREN will be the first people to receive the hampers.

Please, we ask that everyone respect this.

The Centre will close two hours early the day before Food Hampers are distributed, in order to prepare them. The Centre will close at 3pm, Friday, January 4th.



CONTACT CENTRE

Grand Opening, December 21st, 2001

Roosevelt Hotel, 166 E. Hastings
Main Floor



The Contact Centre will be the first point of contact for individuals requiring basic health and safety support. The Centre provides health care workers, nurses, a drug-free drop in space, and harm reduction support for *both women and men* in the centre of the Downtown Eastside. It is one of the new initiatives of the Vancouver Richmond Health Board, in conjunction with the Vancouver Agreement, which is supported by all three levels of government: Federal, Provincial, and Municipal.

The Contact Centre will be open 12 hours per day (from 12 noon until 12 midnight) until mid-January, at which time it will be 24 hour run Centre, staffed with Health Care Workers and nurses. The Contact Centre will be *open seven days a week*. During the day, the Centre will be staffed by two health service providers and five programmers. During the night hours, there will be three health service providers and two programming staff. Health Care workers will provide support and referrals around advocacy, harm reduction, medical issues, etc. The Carnegie Street Program will operate from the Contact Centre. Some of the programming and amenities that have already been decided upon will include:

- Workshops and training sessions (on topics such as overdose prevention, STD and other health issues, basic life skills)
- An area for performance, music therapy, poetry, writing (literacy programs)
- Limited food service from a “warming” kitchen
- Washroom facilities

The Contact Centre is an initiative that was expressed by community members and organizations of the Downtown Eastside, who wanted a 24 hour drop-in space that would address health and safety concerns for people living with addiction. The Contact Centre looks forward to community members dropping in and seeing what they are all about! Drop in!

Hey Beautiful People!

I'm Erin Graham and I'm a new Mental Health Advocate here at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. I figured I would take a few column inches here to let you know some about myself and my background.

So here goes: I'm from Red Deer Alberta, descended from a long line of combine pilots and coal miners. There was a sea-faring man in there somewhere too. My Great-great Grandpa Bruce was a handsome man with a walrus moustache and around the turn of the last century he captained some ship or other. I'm part Irish (I think that part is the curly hair and the attitude, part Scots (the part that loves the bagpipes) and part Welsh (the part that sings like a demented angel). But let's go on now to some more recent history, eh.

Since 1994 I have worked at The Kettle Friendship Society. Some of you may have known me from the drop-in there. I was a Mental Health Worker, and from 1998-2000, I was the Outreach Worker for the drop-in Centre. I love The Kettle, and I think it does some great work. It was time to move on though and I am delighted by the new challenges I am facing here at DEWC, and all the lovely women I am meeting, too. I worked also with Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter from 1989-1992 and I still do volunteer work with them from time to time, as well as some fundraising events. I have been on the Coordinating Collective of the Vancouver Status of Women and the Editorial Board of Kinesis. I worked for a time at Nova House in Richmond; a transition house for battered women and their children. I have also been a waitress, a treeplanter, a roofer (those fancy tiles, the ones that weigh nine pounds a piece, not that stinky hot tar and gravel stuff. Lucky me), and a house cleaner. That last one didn't take, my house looks kinda like a landfill.

Other things I do include performing stand-up comedy, pumping iron, writing stories and telling people all about my Alberta childhood. Oh. And brushing my cat, Stuart-Louise, the most mellow creature on the planet.

My new job here is exciting for me. I feel a little scared, a little excited and a lot interested by all the things I have to learn. I hope you will be patient with me; I will give you the best I have. I can help you with BC Benefits stuff, Disability Applications, hooking up with Mental Health Care Teams, helping you out with addictions issues, figuring out Residential Tenancy problems and a whole bunch of other stuff. You all know way more about your lives than I do. I know that mostly what I can offer you is the addition of my strength to yours. You know what you need, and I and my co-workers can maybe help you get it. It's an honour and a privilege to work here with you, and I look forward to getting to know you better and to singing lots in the drop-in.

If anyone wants to get to know me, get some help from me, or just have a game of crib, look me up. I'm in Marg Scott's old office, my extension number is 229.

WHAT IS THE POPULAR EDUCATION GROUP?

Women coming together to share our experiences, knowledge, ideas and skills with each other so we can learn, grow, work to change our situation and build a stronger community together.

Wednesday nights from 5 to 8pm.

Breaking Free from Helplessness

- **Knowing what I need**
- **Keeping myself open**
- **Having a goal in life**
- **Keeping active**
- **Being creative**
- **Helping myself, no over-extending myself**
- **Accessing resources and services**
- **Seeking answers**
- **Making plans and sticking to them**
- **Solving situations in healthy ways**
- **Maintaining balance/boundaries**
- **Keeping healthy**
- **Being more available to children**
- **Learning new skills to get back on my feet**
- **Keeping solutions in mind**
- **Helping others**
- **Attending groups/socializing**

!WANTED!

SUBMISSIONS FOR ALL MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS!

Poetry, drawings, photos, stories,
Political commentary, community
events, images, jokes, puzzles!

Please submit any original work to Jennifer England, Program Coordinator at any time. There is a newsletter folder on the Outing Board, near the Elevator, where you can also submit your work if she is not at the Centre. You can also submit your work to any staff, and they will pass it along to the Editor of the Newsletter.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

A big, warm thank you to all our amazing volunteers who helped the Women's Centre throughout the Holiday Season!

It has been a busy time of year for all volunteers and staff at the Women's Centre. The volunteers are ones that help keep the Women's Centre running smoothly throughout the year, especially during the busier holiday times.

What have those volunteers been up to? Well, on a typical day at the Women's Centre, you would see volunteers at the desk when you first walked in- helping you sign in, offering rolling papers, giving you a few telephone numbers for other services in the area. The desk volunteer also answers the phone, and helps clients sign up for the advocacy services at the Centre. When you walk in you might pass the Volunteer Floorworker who is making sure the sugar and milk are topped up for your coffee. If you are staying for a snack or one of our lunches, you might be served by a Kitchen Volunteer, who has been working hard to prepare late morning snacks and lunches for more than 200 women each day! Later you might want to check out what is new in the clothing room, which is kept organized and sorted by our Clothing Room Volunteers! If you happen to enjoy computers or would like to learn more about them, our Computer Room Volunteers will be happy to help you out with anything you might need. We also have exceptional Volunteer translators, who help communicate important events information and daily Centre news in both Cantonese and Mandarin to our many of our patrons! Ever wonder who makes up the tobacco bags every month? Centre Volunteers! As well, we have a number of in and out of Centre volunteers who offer their time and talents to the Centre through arts and crafts programming, shiatsu massage, yoga, and food forum events!

This holiday season, the Staff would like to thank all those who gave the Centre an extra special gift of their positive energy: Thank you to both the in-Centre and out-of-area volunteers who ventured down on a Saturday morning and wrapped presents until late afternoon. Thank you to all those who helped with the very successful Christmas Dinner-kitchen preparation, translators, seaters, servers, present distributors, the lovely children's choir that sang for us, and with the set-up and clean-up of the big day! And thank you to all the folks who helped out with both Christmas day and New Years day pancake breakfasts! We couldn't have done it without you!

Please let our volunteers know how much we appreciate their dedication and wonderful presence. A simple "thank you", a smile, or a hug goes a long way! Wink 😊

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- 1:45**

JANUARY 2002

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Library Group - Every Monday at 5pm. Works on developing Centre library and works on literacy through crafts and fun activities!

Battered Women Support Services (BWSS) takes place on Tuesday nights from 5 - 8:30pm. This group offers support for women affected by violence in their lives.

End Legislated Poverty-Organizers Training (ELP) takes place on Monday nights at 5-8pm. Learn to facilitate and organize anti-poverty activists, rallies, and develop political strategies around various poverty issues. Start date to be announced- keep an eye out for posters.

The **Street Nurse** is here every Wednesday from 1 - 4pm to give you information on all kinds of health issues.

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

The **Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Support Group** is back with DAMS! Keep an eye out for start date- most likely February.

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. **Sweat Lodge** 12pm every Thursday (except day after Cheque Issue). Reta takes women to the North Shore for a sweat.

Creative Writing Group - Every Tuesday, 5 pm. Facilitated by Metis performer & playwright, Marie Clements. She will meet women at the Centre at 5:50 pm and walk over to Firehall Arts Centre (280 East Cordova) for the group. Date to be announced- book launch will begin new group.

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS: Materials provided.

Beading with Leona - Every Monday, 1:30 pm.

Clay Works- Will return Tuesdays at 2:30pm in February.

Crochet with Anna- Every Wednesday, 2:00pm

YOGA* (NEW!)- Monday 11:15am (Roma) & Wednesday 2:30pm (Ferma). Blankets provided. Wear comfy clothing!

Fabric Arts with Freeda - Every Friday morning, 10:30am.

Dreamcatchers every Saturday at 1:30pm. Expand your skills and share stories with other women.

SUNDAY 12-5pm	MONDAY 10-5pm (Full Meal Day)	TUESDAY 10-5pm	WEDNESDAY 11-5pm	THURSDAY 10-5pm (Full Meal Day)	FRIDAY 10-5pm	SATURDAY 12-5pm
		1 New Years Day 12:00 Pancake Breakfast Centre Hours: 12-5pm	2 1-4pm Street Nurse 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Bus Rider's Union- Discussion	3 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing 5:00 Healing Circle	4 10:30 Sewing etc. 1:30 Raffle CENTRE CLOSES at 3pm	5 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Food Hampers 2:30 Video
6	7 11:15 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Library Group	8 2:30 Joint Effort- Film and Discussion	9 1-4pm Street Nurse 2:00 Crochet 2:30 Yoga	10 12:00 Sweat Lodge 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing 5:00 Healing Circle	11 10:30 Sewing etc. 1:30 Raffle	12 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
13	14 11:15 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Library Group	15 NO GROUP	16 CHEQUE DAY 1-4pm Street Nurse 2:00 Crochet 2:30 Yoga 5:00 Pop. Ed.	17 TRAINING. 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing 2:00 Tenant's Rights Workshop 5:00 Healing Circle	18 10:30 Sewing etc 1:30 Raffle 3:00 Food Forum 5:00 Music Jam with Special Guests!	19 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
20	21 11:15 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Library Group	22 5:00 BWSS	23 1-4pm Street Nurse 2:00 Crochet 2:30 Yoga 5:00 Popular Ed.	24 Centre Closed for All-day Staff Meeting	25 10:30 Sewing, etc. 1:30 Raffle	26 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
27	28 11:15 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Library Group	29 5:00 BWSS	30 1-4pm Street Nurse 2:00 Crochet 2:30 Yoga 5:00 Popular Ed. &	31 12:00 Sweat Lodge 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Outing 5:00 Healing Circle		* Note: Group Times are subject to change- keep an eye out for Centre updates

January 1st: A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR OF DELIGHT AND DISCOVERY

New Years Day. A fresh start. A new chapter in life waiting to be written. New questions to be asked, embraced, and loved. Answers to be discovered and then lived in this transformative year of delight and self-discovery.

Today carve out a quiet interlude for yourself in which to dream, pen in hand. Only dreams give birth to change. What are your hopes for the future as you reflection the years that have passed? Gradually, as you become curator of your own contentment, you will learn to embrace the gentle yearnings of your heart. But this year, instead of resolutions, write down your most private aspirations. Those longings you have kept tucked away and the time seems right. Trust that now is the time. Ask the questions. The Simple Abundance path brings confidence that the answers will come and we will discover- day by day- how to live them.

Take a leap of faith and begin this wondrous new year by believing. Believe in yourself. And believe that there is a loving Source- a Sower of Dreams- just waiting to be asked to help you make your dreams come true.

(From the Simple Abundance: A Day book of Comfort and Joy, by Sarah Ban Breathnach)



UPCOMING CENTRE WORKSHOPS IN JANUARY

Wednesday, January 2nd: At 2:00pm members of the **Bus Rider's Union** will visit the Women's Centre to talk about their experiences organizing and strategizing around low-cost public transportation, a system that is effective, efficient, and takes into consideration the needs of low income riders.

Tuesday, January 8th: At 2:30pm **Joint Effort**, a **women's prison advocacy** group, will come to show a film and hold a discussion on prison issues that affect women. Joint Effort will then come and join the Women's Centre for a discussion and/or film on the first Tuesday of every month after that.

Friday, January 11th: Women's Centre Food Co-op group, hosts the bimonthly **Food Forum** on specific issues around nutrition, alternative health care, and community organizing. Forum takes place at 3pm in the upstairs drop-in space.

Thursday, January 17th: From 2:00-4:00pm in the downstairs space, the Women's Centre will host a workshop for patrons interested in learning more about **TENANTS RIGHTS**. This workshop will encourage self-advocacy, and run through the basic rights that all tenants have in British Columbia. Please sign up for this workshop on the Outing Board, which is near the elevator and around the corner from the Front Desk. Maximum 20 participants.

WHAT IS YOGA?

Centre Classes: Mondays at 11:15am & Wednesdays at 2:30pm

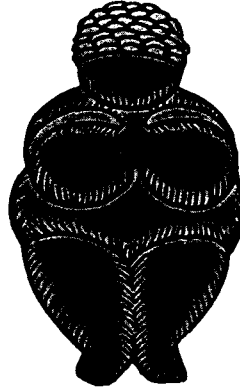
Did you know the Centre hosts two different yoga classes every week, in the downstairs open space? A few people have asked the Editor to write a little bit about this class, as many folks have not had the chance to try it out! So what is yoga all about anyway?

Yoga is a very ancient science and philosophy of life, which originated in India about 4,000 years ago. Very simply, yoga in Sanskrit, means "union" or "to bring together". Yoga brings our body and mind in balance.

Today, yoga is practiced for general health. If one practices yoga regularly, it will improve strength and flexibility, stimulate metabolism, help with relaxation, and reduce stress and anxiety. Yoga is suitable and helpful for people of all ages, shapes, and fitness levels.

My Body

My body, a work of art.
Creator given, creator designed,
Each organ has the function of very fine China,
Each breath we take our spirit is revitalized,
Each breath brings us closer to our spirit guide,
Each step we take shapes our present, past, and future,
Our hands guide us in shaping our futures,
Our minds remember the pain and anguish we suffered over the years,
but then guides us to a higher field of healing
Our heart, the most vital organ teaches us to feel all our emotions,
Some are painful, some are joyful,
most of all our bodies are our own homes.



Linda Boyle
A Word Warrior

A SUCCESS: OUR FIRST WOMEN'S CENTRE COFFEE HOUSE!!

On a beautiful Friday December evening, the Women's Centre hosted its first ever Coffee House, where women from our community shared a delicious meal together and then gathered to enjoy an evening of entertainment! There was a talented and amazing line up of performers who graciously shared their stories, poetry, political satire, songs, dances, and guitar melodies. Each table had a candle, and the room was quiet with anticipation of each act. It didn't matter if you were new at singing or writing or playing the guitar, the atmosphere of the Coffee House was supportive and encouraging! Since the event was so successful, with more than 50 women attending, we will try and have another one in the late Spring! So all "word warriors" alike, you are warmly invited to our next event, which will bring many more surprises, sharing and laughter.... Look for posters in the coming months! A big thank you to all the performers... we will see you next time!



LIFE

Tiny pockets of loveliness within my view
Grand and glorious noble deeds flutter upon my knowing
Powerful, moving, magnificent moments stir me beyond belief
These precious sights, sounds and feelings, are all that make it
Worthwhile

Violence and evil, seem to have sought me out
And delivered their painful blows
My heart has been broken, my body battered, my feelings spat upon
And the wind blew through my guts.
Abandoned, betrayed, left alone without food,
No money, no home, no family, NO ONE!

Life seems so empty, no LOVE, no HOPE
Just then out of nowhere, a pocket of loveliness
Touches me, on that bleak winter night
A Glorious Moment like a smile, an embrace
And out of the darkness I walk into light.
So as to continue my journey, called, "Life".

September 1995

by Sharon Butterworth



A Christmas Story

When I was a young girl I remember Christmas doing different things. Prepare for Christmas putting up a tree, buying presents for my family and friends.

I was very happy and excited because with my family together was very special. Going to Church at 12 midnight with Holiday candles. Christmas mean to me Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a manger with animals. With a big star on top. Shepherds show it and see baby Jesus in a manger and a step ladder coming down singing Jesus is born today. Christmas is a happy time for everybody. Families get together two and share presents and pig feasts.

Christmas time we all forgive each other and love each other. Because this life is to share and we are not here for ever. I wish everybody a Merry, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2002.

With lots of Love,

Helen
God bless you all.



TOBACCO DAY

Tuesday, January 22nd: 10:30am

Reminder! We have changed both the date and time of Tobacco Day. The *Tuesday before* Cheque Issue day, will now be the official day of distributing tobacco bags to members in the Centre. Rather than distributing tobacco after lunch at 1:30pm like we used to do, we will now be handing it out in the morning. The *new time* of distribution will be 10:30am. Although it is earlier in the day, it is far less chaotic for the Centre to give it out in the morning, versus at the busiest time of our day- which is during lunch.

Dreamcatcher Update!

The Centre is sad to hear that Beverly Nelson will no longer be facilitating the Saturday Dreamcatcher arts and crafts group. Beverly has been an amazing coordinator of the Dreamcatcher group for years! She has been friendly and encouraging presence in the Centre and has had a devout following of Dreamcatcher artisans! We wish Beverly all the best in her future endeavours. We will miss you very much.

The Dreamcatcher arts and craft group will continue on Saturdays, and the group will enjoy a new facilitator who will continue the spirit of openness and laughter in the Centre.

Last year, the Downtown Eastside Women's Writing Group produced an amazing collection of poetry entitled "No Supper Tonight: Scapes of the Downtown Eastside". Here is one of their featured poems,

Real Story
Rare experts
Alternate Dimensions
It's human nature to save
him
20% future adventure
Think dream
 GO
Friends keep
In the social whirl, want bet-
ter kisses still misses
A matter of timing
 Vigil
 Share
 Something
 Revived
 Warm
 Million
 Cultured
The cheaper gift

Concession Poem: Group

This January the Downtown Eastside Women's Writing Group will produce another collection of writings, stories, and poetry. This second anthology is the result of dedicated, motivated, and extremely talented women writers who are speaking about their daily lives, memories, and imaginations. The Women's Centre congratulates all in the group who have contributed so much powerful energy to the beautiful world of words. We look forward to the book launch!