

D.E.W. DROP IN

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

MAY 2002

FREE



SINGLE MUMS DAY
TROUT LAKE



BBQ

SUNDAY, MAY 12th

CHILDREN AND MUMS WELCOME!

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

INSIDE:

Single Mothers Day Picnic- Trout Lake, Sunday, May 12

Welfare Cuts Update

Ballot Action for the Referen-dum

The Female Condom- Upcoming Centre Workshop

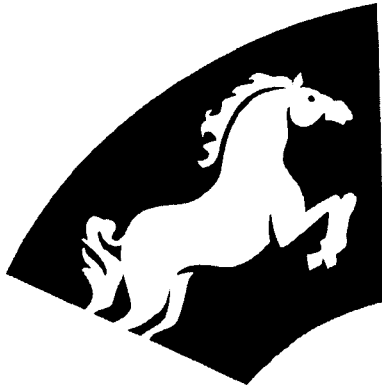


The Horse Woman

I shall wear Diamonds
and a wide brimmed Straw Hat
with silver and leather on it
and I shall spend my social security on white
wine and carrots
and sit in the alley of my barn and listen to
my horse's breathe.
I will sneak out in the middle of a summer's night
and ride the sorrel colt across the moonstruck
meadow
if my old Bones will allow
and when people come to call I will smile and nod.
as I walk past the Gardens to the Barn
and show, instead the Beauty Growing here
in stalls fresh-lined with straw
I will shovel and sweat and wear hay in my
hair as if it were a Jewel

and I will be an embarrassment to all who
look down on me
who have not yet Found the Peace
in Being Free to Love a horse as a Friend
a Friend who waits at midnight hour
with muzzle and nicker and patient eyes
For the kind of woman I will be
When I am old...

Betty Williams
April 10, 2002



Reflections on Everyday Actions

Submitted by Betty Williams

1. Respect All Life:

Spend five minutes reflecting on the value of your thoughts, your abilities and who you are as a person. From today, practice respecting others as you would like to be respected.

2. Reject Violence:

Instead of reacting. "Stop", reflect, then act. Look for and appreciate something special in one person every day.

3. Share with others:

At every opportunity, share a smile with those you meet. Take time to share a skill with someone you know.

4. Listen to understand:

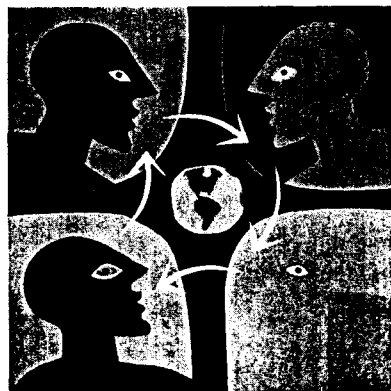
Listen more and talk less. Listen with an open heart to improve your relationships.

5. Preserve the Planet:

Respect mother earth in every step you take. Use material resources carefully and cut down on waste.

6. Rediscover Solidarity:

Today get to know your neighbours and enrich your community. Support a community project and make a difference.



Changes to Welfare

As you know there are many cuts and changes to welfare rates, programs, and benefits. Some came into effect on April 1st, some have been announced but will not come into effect until later. Below is a summary of the changes, for more detailed information on how it will affect you personally, talk with one of the advocates or pick up a Welfare Fact Sheet from the Intake office.

Welfare Rates are going down for some People.

Single parent \$325.38 from \$376.58
(Child over 3 years)

Single employable \$185.00 from \$231.92
(55 – 59 years of age)

Single employable \$185.00 from \$282.92
(60 – 64 years of age)

Employable Couple \$307.22 from \$401.06
(55 – 59 years), no children)

Employable Couple \$307.22 from \$452.06
(60 – 64 years, no children)

Shelter amounts for “employable” families with 3 or more people will be reduced as of July 1st.

3 people \$555 from \$610

4 people \$590 from \$650

5 people \$625 from \$700

6 people \$660 from \$780

\$35 for each additional person

Security Deposits

After April 1, 2002 you will only be able to have 2 outstanding security deposits. As soon as you receive a security deposit, \$20.00 will be deducted from your next cheques. If you have 2 outstanding security deposits (security deposits that have not been paid back) you will not be able to receive a 3rd. Some exceptions apply so talk to an advocate if you run into problems.

This rule does not apply to security deposits which are already counted as an overpayment on your file.

Time Limited Welfare

If you are classified as single or couple “employable” (with no children) you will only be able to collect welfare for 2 out of 5 years.

Single parents, where the oldest child is over 3 years, will have their benefits reduced by \$100 after receiving benefits for 2 years.

3 week waiting period to apply for welfare.

When you apply for welfare you will be required to attend a welfare orientation and complete a 3 week job search BEFORE you can do an application for welfare. An Emergency Needs Assessment Process will be available to those who demonstrate they cannot wait 3 weeks see an advocate to assist you with this process.

Income Exemptions

The earning exemption is gone for every one except those on Disability Level 2. This means every dollar you earn will be deducted by welfare.

If you receive Disability Benefits, Level 2 you can make \$300.00 per month – the rest will be deducted from your welfare.

You will no longer be able to keep the first \$100 of child support or the CPP Orphans benefits – it will all be deducted from your welfare.

Limited Crises Grants

Crises grant for food is limited to \$20 per person

Crises grant for clothing is limited to \$100 per person per year to a maximum of \$400

Crises grant for shelter is limited to the actual shelter cost or the maximum shelter rate for your “category” ie. \$325 for a single person

The total amount of crises grant you will be able to receive in a year is twice your months income. ie. If you are a single employable you will only be able to receive a total of \$1020 in a year in crises grants.

Work Entry Benefits

Welfare will no longer help with employment start-up costs such as transportation, clothing, or child care.

Home Maker Services will no longer be provided by welfare.

Nutritional Supplement

The Nutritional Supplement is an additional benefit of up to \$285.00 per month that you can apply for if you receive Disability Benefits, Level 2. It is designed to cover additional nutritional items, bottled water, and vitamins.

To be eligible for this benefit you must have a “chronic, progressive deterioration of health because of a severe medical condition AND

Because of the chronic progressive deterioration of health you have one of the following symptoms: malnutrition, underweight status, significant weight change, muscle mass loss, bone density loss, neurological degeneration, significant deterioration of an organ, or moderate to severe immune suppression.

ALSO, your doctor must confirm that getting these items, (nutritional supplements, bottled water, and/or vitamin supplements will alleviate the symptoms and prevent imminent danger to life.

To apply for this benefit you must request an application form from your Financial Assistance Worker. The form must then be completed by your doctor.

Proposed Changes to Disability Benefits – Level I and II

The government is in the process of changing Disability Benefits. Welfare will have two categories – Continuous Assistance (Disability) and Temporary Assistance (employable).

There will no longer be a Disability, Level I.

Disability, Level II will no longer be permanent – meaning you could be reassessed at any time.

To be eligible for Disability Level II you will have to have a severe mental or physical impairment that is likely to continue for at least two years, and require significant assistance to perform daily living activities. The help required must be in the form of an assistive device or significant help or supervision of another person.

Although there is no date yet on when these changes will take place, they will drastically reduce the number of people eligible to receive Disability Benefits.

REFEREN-DUM

WHAT DO I DO WITH MY BALLOT??

Excerpts from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs news release

"What to do with your Referendum Ballot

- We are working with other organizations to promote an "active boycott" strategy. An active boycott provides choice for individuals you want to express their opposition to the referendum.
- You can send or drop off your ballot to the following locations:

Chief Stewart Phillip
Union of BC Indian Chiefs
500 - 342 Water Street
Vancouver, BC

United Native Nations
110 - 425 Carrall Street
Vancouver, BC

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre
E. Hastings.
Vancouver, BC

The unsigned ballots will be counted.
Unsigned ballots will be presented, in protest
to the Government of BC or disposed of at a
public ceremony.

An active boycott allows the individual to redirect
their unsigned ballot as a form of protest.

Sending a spoiled ballot to Elections BC will lend
credibility to the process and may make it easier for
the referendum questions to pass.



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**

MAY 2002

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Library Group –This group will now meet weekly during the day to prepare for the opening of the Library. This will no longer be an evening group. Date to be announced.

Organizers Training (ELP) takes place on Monday nights at

5-8pm. Learn to facilitate and organize anti-poverty rallies and develop political strategies around various poverty issues. Begins May 6th with co-facilitators, June and Erin.

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.

Creative Writing Group – Change of time! Group will take place in the afternoons. Date and time to be announced.

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

The **Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Support Group** is back with Mary from DAMS! Takes place Wednesdays from 5-8pm. All are welcome.

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. Temporarily on hold.

Music Jam- Every third Friday of the month. Sing and play instruments with special guests!

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS: Materials provided.

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

Yoga- Monday 10:45am with Roma. Blankets provided.

Wear comfy clothing! Note new time!

Crochet with Anna- Every Wednesday, 2:00pm

Collage Arts with Anna B.-Temporarily on Hold.

Fabric Arts with Freeda - Every Friday morning, 10:00am.

Dreamcatchers every Saturday with Denny at 1:30pm.

Expand your skills and share stories with other women.

SUNDAY 12-5pm	MONDAY 10-5pm	TUESDAY 10-5pm	WEDNESDAY 11-5pm	THURSDAY 10-5pm	FRIDAY 10-5pm	SATURDAY 12-5pm
* Note: Group Times are subject to change- keep an eye out for Centre updates			1 1-4pm Street Nurse 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Crochet	2 1:30 Women's Voice	3 10:30 Sewing etc.	4 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:30 Video
5	6 10:45 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Organizer's Training	7 2:30 Joint Effort- Film and Discussion	8 12:30pm Outing 1-4pm Street Nurse 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Crochet 5:00 Harm Reduct.	9 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 Healing Circle	10 10:00 Sewing etc	11 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
12 Mother's Day Single Mother's Picnic- Trout Lake	13 10:45 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Organizer's Training	14	15 1-4pm Street Nurse 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Crochet 5:00 Harm Reduct.	16 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 Healing Circle	17 10:00 Sewing etc 5:00 Music Jam with Special Guests!	18 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
19	20 10:45 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Organizer's Training	21 2:30 Safer Sex Workshop-Female Condom	22 1-4pm Street Nurse 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Crochet 5:00 Harm Reduct. <i>Place of Grace 8:30am-8pm</i>	23 Centre Closed for All-day Staff Meeting <i>Place of Grace 8:30am-8pm</i>	24 10:00 Sewing, etc.	25 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
26	27 10:45 Yoga 1:30 Beading 5:00 Organizer's Training	28	29 1-4pm Street Nurse 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Crochet 5:00 Harm Reduct.	30 1:30 Women's Voice 5:00 Healing Circle		

CENTRE NEWS

Alice Kendell (Legal Advocate): Alice has been with the Centre for 5 years as both a Mental Health and Legal Advocate. Alice is about to have a baby boy in June, and will be going on Maternity Leave for the next year. We will dearly miss her laughter, her inspiration to change our political systems in BC! You always see Alice at community meetings, protests, rallies, and inside the Minister's offices. The Centre will miss her sharp analyses and commitment to political organizing.

Well, it is hard to be in my last week at the Women's Centre. I am going to miss every one and miss being part of the Centre. The years I have been here have been a great experience – I have learned so much from the women I have met and worked with. I know the Centre goes through its ups and downs – but at the end of the day it is a wonderful place to be – full of wonderful women with so much to share. It has truly been an honour to work here.

Although I will miss not working here, I still plan on being around (recruiting babysitters). I really look forward to going on the Volunteer Camping Trip in May it is so much nicer to be able to spend time together in a relaxed environment.

I want to thank everyone for the going away party and baby shower – thanks for the kind words and thoughts (and of course the gifts).

Love Alice



Jennifer England (Program Coordinator): Jennifer has been with the Centre for 3 years, both as a volunteer and Program Coordinator. Jennifer is leaving the Centre because she is moving to the Yukon in the early summer.

I want to express my gratitude to all patrons, volunteers, and staff for being a part of this incredible community- the Women's Centre. It is with mixed emotions that I leave. Although I am excited for new opportunities, I have developed strong relationships with so many incredible people. I have loved working at the Centre, and the chance to get to know the strength, humour, and love of women at the Centre, on retreats, and camping trips. It has been an honour to be part of this community. I will miss all of you- and all the daily craziness of this place- this sacred house.

Peace, Jennifer



COMMUNITY PLAY CELEBRATES CARNEGIE CENTRE AND THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE!

The Downtown Eastside, with the Strathcona community and others, are beginning to work on a **community play** to celebrate Carnegie's 100th year anniversary in 2003! If you like to act, sing, make things with your hands, play music, enjoy working in a team, or are wondering just what this play-thing is all about, come to Carnegie's Open House to find out! Coming soon to an evening community centre near you.

Come for Refreshments and a Multimedia performance!

Carnegie Centre: Thursday, May 16th
Time to be announced

CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

HAIKUS

Hai S
 Ku



Cousin Rose

Rhythm of the ocean
drunk in the morning
glass goddess's haunting perfume

Translucent summer night
the cold black steel
man bleeds into eternity

Angela

Pick only a clean marble
leave it like once
ferocious star but fresh ice

Poetry and porcelain
never free hot sex
embrace rip dark self

She is a goddess
remember a cat likes most
breathing for a wild slow heart

Ilona

Our raw leg has
pound down sky but
use my arm as you did as TV

Girl
fat
Bug

Below peace beat smile blue
after they who
stiff thin grass

Young woman
circle
kiss

Margaret S.

White dog sits on patch quilt
crows fly past moon filled window
dog with wood does not bark

Water seeks its level
beams laid straight
pools of reflection

Muriel

Languid symphony
repulsive manipulate
smear our falling vision

Universe listens
vast winter sky is bone still
puppy licks and plays

Spring storm-dreaming skin
incubate velvet whisper
beneath the rain's flood

Scream arm leg feet growl
skin is raw apparatus
question the rhythm

Leith

Mist of the forest
bitter but luscious honey
moments together

Ugly whisper scream
drunk with power and blood
eternity shot

Catherine

Two men crapping their pants
as mad mother frantically
beats bare butts

As a beautiful woman stares
she is daydreaming about
Mrs. or Mr. Right

Kari

Some worship under power
leave here weak and ugly
how and why I ache

Single Mother's Day

Sunday May 12th is Single Mum's Day in the Park. This is a women and children only, event organized by Vancouver Status of Women, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and Crabtree Corner. There will be a BBQ and entertainment at Trout Lake where women will also be able to attend the Mother's Day PowWow. Transportation to Trout Lake will be provided. Watch the Activity board for more details and sign-up.
Single Mother's Day



Thoughts of a Wondering Homeless Youth

Where are my moral upbringings leading me today?
Where are my school chums today?
Where are the icons I cherished when I was a child?
Where are my grassroots my ancestors left me?

The grassroots I mean SPEAK to me in my heart,
They are in the air I breathe.
They are in my rivers, forests, and the blue sky I look to each day,
They are in my ritual prayers every day.

Why must I always remember past life experiences?
Why I ask was I send to a government RESIDENTIAL school?
Why are our lands being sold as if to make us like SLAVES to the whitemans rules?
Why are our children taken from us to be sold like CATTLE or to be SLAUGHTERED
by the whiteman's hand?

I am a SURVIVOR OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL,
I am a SURVIVOR OF ABUSE,
I am a SURVIVOR OF THE WHITEMAN ADOPTION,
I am the SURVIVOR OF MY PEOPLE'S DISGRACE.

Written by: Little Running Deer

News From Your Advocates

May 6 – 11: Mental Health Week

There are lots of educational activities throughout Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside for anyone interested in learning more about mental health and mental illness. Please see Erin or Christine if you would like information about the *Mental Health Education Series* presented by Burnaby Mental Health Services, or *Mental Health Week at Strathcona* here in the D.E.

Poverty is a Mental Health Issue

The Staff and volunteers at the Women's Centre provide many services that at first glance, may seem to have little to do with Mental Health. However, if you think of all of the issues that can cause stress in your daily life, you will see that we deal with most of them in one way or another. The various services offered here at the Centre can help you to deal with some of the stresses you have as a woman living in the Downtown Eastside.

One of the common things that we deal with, and one which affects everybody living and working in this community, is poverty.

Do you live on welfare? Do you live in a hotel room or some other kind of bad or unsafe housing? Are you one of the many Centre members who worries about how to feed her family? Maybe you're one of the many who works the streets to make ends meet or to feed your habit. All of the women who deal with these issues are more likely to suffer from addictions and poor physical health; more likely to be jobless and untrained for good work.

The effects of poverty are made worse by (even more) recent government cutbacks, rotten government enforced job training, and government and media poor-bashing which misinforms the middle class about who poor people are and why they are poor.

All of these things contribute to high levels of stress and cause anxiety, depression, and feelings of low self-esteem.

Lately, we are all concerned about the recent cuts to welfare and disability rates. If you are feeling shaky about the cuts and want information about how they will affect you, please access the information posted around the Centre. The Advocacy team can help you understand the new laws and regulations if you're not sure how it all applies to you.

The good news is that YOU can make a difference by joining others from your community in telling our neighbours and our government that we matter, our children matter, and poverty matters. The government needs to hear from you about how these cuts are impacting your life. Get informed. Get involved. Join the people speaking out in your community.

Raise your voice and make your opinion heard.

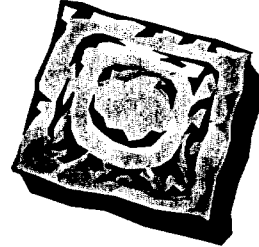
UPCOMING WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN

SAFER SEX TOPIC:

WHAT **IS** A FEMALE CONDOM?

HOW DOES IT **WORK**?

WHY IS IT SO **FUNKY**?



Come and join us for a funky workshop with Melanie from
Vancouver Native Health!
ALL WELCOME

Games, Question and Answer and More!

When: Tuesday May 21st

Where: The Women's Centre

Time: 2:30pm

Some FACTS on the Female Condom:

Since 1977 there have been at least 6 patents awarded in the US for a female applied condom- but only one has made it to market. The female condom is owned by the Female Health Company- and has worldwide rights to the female condom. The condom used to be marketed under the name "Reality", now it is referred to as the "Female Condom".

Female condoms are currently the only *female applied* condom of choice for a woman to protect herself from STDs if she is sexually active. With the female condom helps women seek protection from the spread of AIDS.