# D.E.W. DROP IN

# Downtown Eastside Women Do Drop In

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

March 2005

Free



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### International Women's Day Rally and March ~ March 8, 2005

#### Vancouver events are Friday and Saturday March 4 & 5

#### Friday March 4, 2005

Evening Gathering at Downtown Eastside Women's Centre 302 Columbia Street Doors open at 6:30 pm for networking and refreshments Speakers and entertainment 7:30 - 9:00 pm

#### Saturday March 5, 2005

Pancake Breakfast at Downtown Eastside Women's Centre from 9 - 10:30 am

March leaves Downtown Eastside Women's Centre at 11 am

The Rally at the Vancouver Public Library South Plaza (Robson & Homer) at noon

#### Women's Forum at the Vancouver Public Library

Come and celebrate with local activists in an interactive format 1:00 - 4:00 pm in the lower level of the Vancouver Public Library All events are FREE Wheelchair Accessible Sign language interpretation on Friday night and at the Rally on Saturday Email us at iwd2005@shaw.ca
To register for childcare, call 604 - 323 - 5662
For general information, call 604 - 708 - 0447

### SEXUAL ASSAULT

Assault is the intentional use of force against another person without that's person's consent. A sexual assault may include someone kissing, touching, or having sexual intercourse with you without your consent. It can be a stranger or it can be your lover, husband, date, friend, acquaintance, family member. sexual assault is a crime acted out in a sexual way. Power and control are the motives of this crime. Sexual assault is not a crime of passion. Any person, regardless of the relationship to the victim, can be charged for sexual assault. A sexual offense committed by a husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, brother, or father is a crime.

Most offenders appear normal, and are known to the victim (89% of victims in B.C knew their assailants)

Women of every size, race, disability and age have been sexually assaulted. Studies of offenders show that most assaults are planned: the victim's dress or lifestyle have nothing to do with the offenders' actions. Women who are assaulted don't ask for it ', either by the way they dress or by their lifestyle.

A significant number occur in a home; many occur during the daylight hours.

#### If you are Approached

There is no easy way to avoid being sexually assaulted. Depending on where you are or whom you are with, your options will be different. Your prime objective is always to get out of an offender's control.

In some situations, assertive behavior may prevent the assault. Many offenders look for women they can overpower to build their sense of power and control. If a self-assured, confident image is presented using a firm voice and direct eye contact, the offender may be dissuaded from the assault. In other situations, your best protection may be either to run, or scream to draw attention. The adrenaline created through your fear may give you strength to run faster or scream louder than you would normally expect.

Because of the often violent and unpredictable nature of a sexual assault, following all the suggested techniques does not guarantee the prevention of an assault. It is important to remember that assaults are neither provoked nor deserved. You are not to blame if you are unable to stop an attack.

#### If you are Assaulted

Get to a safe place. Get medical help.

Call a friend, family member or the police and have them accompany you to be checked out for physical injuries, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Do not douche or shower.

Save the clothes you were wearing.

You are not required to go for HIV testing right after you are assaulted,

and it is advisable to wait to be tested until after your examination. Emergency medical assistance is available at Vancouver Hospital Emergency. A team of female physicians from a Sexual Assault roster provides on-call examinations, medico legal assessment and crisis intervention on a 24-hour basis.

Call 604 875 - 4995.

Call the WAVAW 24-hour Crisis Line for support and information at 1 - 877 - 392 - 7583.

Call the Police. For emergency help, call 911.

Non - emergency help is also available from the Community Safety Office at 501 E. Hastings or call 604 687 - 1772. Report the assault to the police.

Come to see the Victim Services Worker at the D.E.W.C for support and assistance.

Believe in yourself. What happened to you was wrong. No matter what you were doing or wearing, or where you were when the assault took place, you are not to blame.

Give yourself time to heal. Recovery from sexual assault is different for everyone. Consider counselling. Sometimes talking can be the most important step to healing. Carol and Reta are at the Downtown eastside women centre. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and all day Saturday. Book an appointment or just drop in.

#### If Someone you Know is Sexually Assaulted

About 40% of victims tell no one about their assault. If a friend has been sexually assaulted and turns to you for your support, the most important thing you can do is listen. Don't worry about what to say. Your friend trusts you, that 's what is important. During the assault, all sense of power and control were violently taken away from them. Support them in reclaiming control.

Believe them. They need you to legitimize their pain and experience. Tell them it was not their fault. No matter where they were, what they were wearing, if they were working the streets, or how much they were drinking or using drugs, no one deserves or asks to be raped. They are not responsible for someone's criminal behavior.

Refer them to a Victim Services Worker to help them figure out their options. They do not have to press charges to get help or receive confidential service.

If the attack has recently occurred, attend to their immediate medical needs. Caution them not to a shower or douche if they have not yet done so. Remind them to save the clothes they were wearing. Get help yourself. You may need to talk to someone about your feelings. Contact the downtown eastside women's centre for information!

Services Include

Crisis Intervention and Emotional Support
Assistance with Police reports, referrals to appropriate agencies.
Accompaniment to Hospitals, Police, Crown Interviews and court.
Liaising with Criminal Justice System Personnel.

Assistance with Crime Victim Assistance Applications and Victim Impact Statement.

# TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF THE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your response toward a woman who has survived sexual assault can greatly influence how she will deal with the trauma. Those close to a survivor may experience many confusing emotions themselves. These feelings may include disbelief, anger or guilt. It is important that you get the understanding and support you need from someone other than the survivor, perhaps a friend or a counsellor.

During a sexual assault a woman experiences complete powerlessness, loss of control, and may fear physical injury or death. Because of this, it is important that a woman regains her control by making her own decisions and having these decisions respected. This includes deciding whom she will tell about the consent. To do so may cause her to re-experience the feeling of powerlessness.

When the shock of what actually has happened wears off, confusing feelings may follow. A survivor may feel humiliated, guilty, embarrassed, ashamed, mistrustful, angry, enraged or revengeful. Her moods may swing and she may do and say things that are not usual for her. Support her anger, rage and revengeful feelings. These are healthy emotions when directed outwardly in a non-destructive manner. If you are uncomfortable with these feelings and encourage her not to express them they may be directed inwardly and be harmful to her.

It is important not to blame her for the crime committed against her. Sexual assaults are meant to humiliate and degrade the woman and are acts of aggression. Whether she fought or cooperate with the attacker, she made the best choice to come out of the situation alive.

Try not to overprotect her. Remember, it is important for her to regain control of her life. This means that she will make her own decisions and ask for help as she believes she needs it. She is the expert on what she needs at any given time. You may feel angry and wish for revenge as well. If this is the case you must find someone other than her with whom to

express this.

Do not ask probing questions or focus on the sexual aspect of the crime. Rape\* is not about sex: it is an act of violence and coercion where sex is used to gain power and control over a woman. The rapist does this by forcing sex. Do ask her about those things that concern her the most. Communicate your own acceptance of her by being natural and letting her know you are willing to listen. Because of your closeness she may feel embarrassed or ashamed. In this case, encourage her to speak with a friend and / or a rape crisis counsellor.

(\* In the above paragraph sexual assault and rape mean any unwanted sexual contact including kissing, touching, grabbing, or forced sexual intercourse.)

Showing affection is important; it shows that you still care for her. If you have been relating sexually, it may be best to use non-sexual forms of touching and wait until she indicates she is comfortable with sexual relations. She may wish to be celibate for a period of time. It is important that this be respected as necessary for her healing. It most often has nothing to do with the partner involved.

Often a woman wants to forget about the assault. This may unintentionally be reinforced by those close to her. Any message, verbal or nonverbal, which lets the woman know that it is not okay to discuss the sexual assault (i.e. facial expressions, changing the subject to another topic, or statements such as "try not to think about it") may act to delay the healing process.

Do continue to live and talk the way you always have. Do not try to avoid the subject. Encourage the expression of her feelings, but respect her right to privacy. Providing a caring environment in which a woman feels free to express her concerns around the assault will help facilitate the healing process.

# @ THANK YOU!

# TO ALL WHO TOOK THE TIME TO FILL IN A SURVEY AND ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETING.

In general, Centre members are satisfied with their experiences at the Centre, there continues to be concerns in regards to communication, information and accountability. Most people who answered the survey expressed that there have been positive changes in the Centre in the last few months.

OF COURSE THERE IS LOTS OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

A heart felt thank you goes out to members, volunteers and staff who have shown incredible dedication and commitment to the Centre as role models for the rest of us who may not have done as much as we could have. We could be more helpful, less grumpy, tried a little harder, not shown impatience, smiled more, paid a little more attention, the list goes on. You make us look good.

FOOD, FOOD, FOOD, FOOD, continues to be the number one reason for people to come to the Centre, you want more food and better food.

SAFE PLACE AND COMMUNITY were equally important reasons for the Centre. You want the Centre to be a safe place for all women and children. You want staff and volunteers to take care of disrespectful behavior in the Centre and you want other members to treat the place like home. Of course you expect staff and volunteers to act professionally at all times!

CLOTHING ROOM. The surveys and remarks at the Community meeting reflected the central role of this service and that there are many, many problems related to this area.

PROGRAMMING – NOW! Members are asking for programs to be reestablished. Outings, support groups, camping, crafts etc.

STAFF – We received lots of different responses, good and bad, staff should be proud of good performance but should also work together to create community.

# Some other concerns include:

- Lack of trust in staff and volunteers;
- In accessible staff;
- · Longer hours;
- Dirty Centre and poor bathroom facilities
- LAUNDRY service back –please

There is so much more and if you want the complete results that is available through Cynthia Low the Administrative Coordinator.

THE PROPERTY AND A SECOND

# SO WHAT NOW

Well, we have the challenging task of seeing what we can do. Of course everything takes time and although not everything takes money – it would help. We have to make difficult decisions like do we spend on food or programs, take care of the bathroom or clothing room first. We continue to need your help in making these difficult decisions. Please join a committee.

FOOD – Since January we have made a decision to increase the food, tea and coffee budget to \$1.50 per person per day at the Centre for 200 women a day! That is definitely not enough because this is the only meal of the day for most people. Unfortunately we do not get sufficient funding to provide food at the Centre. Most of the funding that we get from governments are tied to staff positions and there is no provision for food. The money for food comes from cash donations from individuals as well as food donations. The problem with food donations is that the food is not always the freshest and also full of sugar and carbohydrates. In the next few months we are going to try very hard to find supporters for the food program so that we can increase the quality and quantity of food we are serving and also to offer more fresh veggies and fruit.

A SAFE PLACE – To make the Centre a safer place for women and children we will be working with staff and volunteers to improve their ability to deal with difficult people. Centre users also have to make a commitment to follow the guidelines and policies of the Centre. In order to create a more harmonious space we expect everyone to understand and follow the guidelines and staff is expected to enforce Centre Guidelines – Please remember that it is up to each and every one of us. The Guidelines are posted on the following page!

#### IN THE CLOSET

Face it the clothing room is not even a room it's a big closet that is too small, too packed and just not sufficient. At the community meeting there was a suggestion that we start a group that specifically wants to help make the clothing room more workable and accessible for all. We need new policies to keep it organized and clean as well as to deal with concerns of times, fairness and fights that happen in the closet. Announcements for this committee will be made in the next newsletter.

## **GROUPS AND OUTINGS**

Again we do not have much funding but we do have our van back. It needs to be repaired but as soon as it is safe and road worthy we will start coordinating little outings. We are finding ways to bring back the evening groups by; Working with partner organizations so that we can offer groups together Finding volunteer facilitators to lead groups

Looking at peer support programs to help women of the centre start their own groups

Asking for funding to support much needed groups

Again programming cost are not covered by any funders; cost include staff time, food, bus tickets, childcare honorariums etc.

We realize this is an important aspect of wellness that the Centre needs to provide and promise – we're working on it!

# FINANCE UPDATE FROM BENITA BUNJUN HIGHLIGHTS

All debts paid off and/or payment schedules established and managed Revitalized relationships with funders Good cash flow

Preparations made for audits

Fund raising Committee established

#### **Priorities**

r

Increase funding for programming and evening groups

Diversify funding base to include foundations, corporations and non-government sources

Rebuild Centre Term Deposit so that we have reserve funds for emergencies

Jan Jan - May 2/36

# DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE 302 Columbia Street, Vancouver 604.681.8480

# LUNCH SERVED DAILY AT 12:30-1:45

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY,	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 10:00 Massage & Sewing 1:30 deyas Alcohol and Drug Counseling 5:00 28W\$\$	2 11:00-12 Computer Class 11-3:00 BWSS 11:30 Sweat Lodge LEGAL ADVOCACY 2:00 Crochet & Raffle	3 10:30-4:00 IIG Math & English-University Access Program 11: 12 Book Club	4 11-3:00 BWSS First Nations Worker's Support Worker 1:30 Resumes 6:30 IWD Speakers and Refreshments	Pancake Breakfast 9/00- 10:30 Women March Leaves at 11:00
6 1:30 Dreamcathers 2:00 Video	7 10:00 Arts & Crafts 10:00 CWS 10:30 YOGA 1:30 Beading 3-4:30 Carnegie Crafts	8 10:00 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas Alcohol and Drug Counseling 2:00 Bingo 5:00 BWSS	9 11:00-12 Computer Class 11:30 Sweat Lodge 11-3:00 BWSS LEGAL ADVOCACY 2:00 Crochet & Raffle	10 10:30-4:00 IIG Math & English-University Access Program 11-12 Book Club	11 11-3:00 BW95 First Nations Women's Support Worker 1:30 Resumes	12 2:00 Video
13 1:30 Dreamcathers 2:00 Video	14 10:00 Crafts 10:00 CWS 10:30 YOGA 1:30 Beading 3-4:30 Carnegie Crafts	15 10:00 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas Alcohol and Drug Counseling 2:00 Bingo 5:00-8W65	16 11:00-12 Computer Class 11:30 Sweat Lodge 11-3:00 BWSS LEGAL ADVOCACY 1:00 RESUMES 2:00 Crochet & Raffle	17 10:30-4:00 IIG Math & English-University Access Program 11-12 Book Club	18 11-3:00 BWS6 First Nations Women's Support Worker 1:30 Resumes	19 2:00 Video
20 1:30 Dreamcathers 2:00 Video Spring Begins	21 10:00 Crafts 10:00 CWS 10:30 YOGA 1:30 Beading 3-4:30 Carnegie Crafts	10 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas Alcohol and Drug Counseling 2:00 Raffle 5:00 BWSS	23 / CENTRE CLOSED For Board and Staff Strategic Planning	CENTRE CLOSED  For Board and Staff Strategic Planning	Good Friday Open from 12:00- 5:00	26 2:00 Video
27 1:30 Dreamcathers 2:00 Video	28 Easter Monday Open from 12:00-5:00	29 10 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas Alcohol and Drug Counseling 2:00 Bingo 5:00 BWSS	30 10:30-12 Computer Class 11:30 Sweat Lodge 11-3:00 BWSS LEGAL ADVOCACY 2:00 Crochet & Raffle	31 10:30-4:00 IIG Nath & English-University Access Program 11-12 Book Club		

#### REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Chinese Women's Group (CWS) -Open to women whose first language is Chinese. The group will focus on cultural awareness, advocacy, and social events.

Carnegie Crafts—Arts and crafts each week with new themes all the time, all women welcome, everything supplied.

**Literacy Workshop** – Working with books, themes and word puzzles. Learn while having fun!

Massage—Pamper yourself courtesy of Anita and Rosemary!

Resume Workshop – Create your own Resume with the help of Eemina.

The **Street Nurse**, **Christina**, comes by every Tuesday between 12noon-2pm to give you information on all kinds of health issues.

BWSS' First Nations Women's Support Worker, Mona, comes by every Friday from 11-3, talk to her if you need help with a problem.

**BWSS Legal Advocate, Olatz** comes by every Wednesday from 11-3, if you need help with legal issues, child protection, custody &access or general legal information.

Yoga— with Janet A women welcome, wear comfortable clothing, practice breathing and stretching exercises, good for the body and mind.

**Sweat Lodge** – Reta will be taking women every Wednesday meet at the Centre at 11:30

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS with materials supplied Beading with Denny - Every Monday, 1:30 pm.

Crochet with Anna & Freeda-Every Wednesday, 2:00pm.

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

**Dreamcatchers with Denny** -Every Sunday at 1:30pm.

# EVENING PROGRAMMING

**Battered Women Support Services**-Support for women experiencing violence. Tuesday on rotating schedule from 5-8:30

**Music Jam**- Sing and play instruments with special guests. Taiko Night-Drum with Cynthia and the Taiko Group.

Women's Health Clinic-on going 59 West Pender

Remindr-no bus helds or childre.

# Canadian Mental Health Association

# CMHA Vancouver/Burnaby is pleased to host a Tax Reduction Clinic

When: March 14, 2005

7:30 pm-9:00

Where: CMHA Vancouver/ B 175 West Broadway, Vancouver

## Who Should Attend?

- If you have mental health or physical disability and are not receiving a Disability Tax Credit
- If you are a parent or caregiver if a person with a disability
- If you wish to claim additional medical expenses related to your(or your dependant's disability)
- People with disabilities who are working are encouraged to attend too!

## How does it Work?

- 1. Attend this free info session. Identify what tax credits and deductions you may be missing.
- Arrange a free private consultation or telephone interview for a personal review of your tax situation. Includes family members and caregivers.
- 3. Decide if this is a benefit to you and/your family.

PLEASE RSVP TO CMHAVB BY CALLING 604 872-4902

# In Memory of the missing women, by Mother Earth's Heart Beat



# WANT TO VOLUNTEER???

Hospital Visits has became a new volunteer position...

Drop by to meet Myrna our Out Reach Worker, or Sara if you are interested.



# BARRING GUIDELINES

THE Downtown Eastside Women's Centre strives to offer a safe space for women. That means that women accessing the Centre need to be respectful of each other, volunteers and staff.

# You will have to leave for the day for:

**Verbal Fighting** – This includes swearing or shouting at other women, volunteers or staff

**Discrimination** – If you make negative comments or put Women down based on their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, physical or mental ability or appearance

Disruptive Behaviour - Of any kind

# You will have to leave for up to two weeks for:

Drugs or Alcohol use – In the Centre, including bathrooms Washroom Use – Not coming out when asked Child/Elder Abuse – Shouting, Swearing, intimidating Harassment – Of any kind

# You will have to leave for up to six months for:

**Assault** – Hitting, punching, pushing, spitting, or throwing something Even if you miss!

Property Destruction - No matter how small or relevant

Theft - Of any property inside the Centre

**Abusive Behaviour** – That impacts the Centre members and keeps staff for doing their job safely and effectively.

After the barring period is over, you are allowed back into the Centre after you have met with a staff member and you have agreed that you respect the Woman's Centre policies.

ANY CONCERNS REGARDING BARRINGS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH ALICE KENDALL OR CYNTHIA LOW

# March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racism

"March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, asks each of us to make a commitment to end racism, which grows best inthe soil of bigotry and prejudice. By accepting this challenge, we keep Canada a country to be proud of; we bring our vision of Canada closer to reality."

The Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry, Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, Canada. Since 1966, the United Nations has designated March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It commemorates the peaceful demonstrators in Sharpeville, South Africa, who were killed and wounded in 1960 during a demonstration against apartheid. Since 1989, the Government of Canada

has supported the UN declaration with its annual March 21 campaigns The annual March 21 is an opportunity for Canada to renew its commitment to ending racism and discrimination in our communities, our country and internationally. In addition, the United Nations has declared the years from 1993 to 2003 as the "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination."



Thank-you to all volunteers, with sincere appreciation for all that you contribute to the Women's Centre and the larger downtown eastside community.

Alcohol and Drug Counseling, Advocacy, Outreach in the Drop-In

DEYAS Tuesday 1:30-3:30pm
Alcohol & Drug Counselling
1-1 counselling, support, referrals

BWSS Wednesdays: 11:00 - 3:00

Legal Advocacy on issues such us
custody & access, child protection or any
legal issues.

BWSS Fridays: 11:00 - 3:00

First nations support worker will be here to help you with any problems you may have, or if you just need to talk ask for Mona

BWSS- Support for women experiencing violence is back!!
Tuesday March 1st
from 5:00 - 8:00

# Stuff Happening at DEWC

# COMPUTER CLASSES IN THE DEWC COMPUTER ROOM



Dionne from the Learning Exchange will be at DEWC on Wednesday from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon

Dionne is here to help you learn more, this class is for beginner and for those with more experience.

# Learn how to....

- ❖ Set up an email account
- Do internet searches
- Use different programs
- Create documents
- Type...faster and better

All Women Welcome!!!

# WOMEN'S WORDS POETRY AND PROSE FROM THE DTES

# Living With Fear

I fear of living and dieing
And the unknowing
Sometimes. I don't know if
I'm going anywhere and
I fear of stopping there are so
Many fears in me.
I do fear of sharing with others
But I know that I have to share it with
Someone else because if I don't I will
Fear all the time and without fear
I would not be where I'm at today
And I would not feel how
I feel today.

By Sandra Jim

# Hell, Heaven, Earth

Hell wants me
Heaven wants too
Take me
But Earth needs me
I feel like I have been
In hell for a bit
I have almost gone too
Heaven
But I'm still here
Thanks too creator, god
Goddess
One day I will find
Out why I'm needed
Here

By Sandra Jim

# Downtown Eastside Women's Centre's 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

# Who we are and how we came to be...

As you all may know, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre was established on March 21 of 1978. This month we will have provided a safe place for women and children living in the Downtown Eastside for twenty-seven years!

# Our Mission

The mission of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre is to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment for women from all walks of life, who live and/work in the Downtown Eastside. To achieve this goal, the Centre provides supportive surroundings with meals, counselling, advocacy and programs which nurture and empower members.

# Our Purpose

The constitution of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre was written in 1978 upon incorporation and is still relevant today.

- To provide a comfortable, safe drop-in centre.
- To provide recreation and and self-help programs.
- To act as a source of information by assisting women with referrals concerning their needs.
- To provide a social space and facilitate the opportunity for women of diverse backgrounds to interact and build community.
- To educate the public and all levels of government about issues concerning women in the area.

# "Because We're Women"

was written by Australian
Feminist
Joyce Stevens
in the early 1970's

BECAUSE WOMAN'S WORK IS UNDERPAID OR UNPAID & WHAT WE LOOK LIKE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAT WHAT WE DO & IF WE GET RAPED IT'S OUR FAULT & IF WE LOVE WOMEN IT'S BECAUSE WE CAN'T GET A REAL MAN & IF WE EXPECT COMMUNITY CARE FOR OUR FAMILY WE ARE SELFISH & IF WE STAND UP FOR OUR RIGHTS WE ARE LOUD & IF WE DON'T WE ARE TYPICAL WEAK FEMALES & IF WE WANT TO GET MARRIED WE ARE OUT TO TRAP A MAN & IF WE DON'T WE ARE UNNATURAL & BECAUSE WE AREN'T DEEMED RESPONSIBLE ENOUGH TO DECIDE IF, WHEN AND HOW WE WANT TO GIVE BIRTH ...

WE ARE FEMINISTS