



WOMEN'S CENTRE

D.E.W. DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

Downtown Eastside Women Do Drop In

April 2006

Free



INSIDE:

- Calendar of events
- Poetry and thoughts from DEWC
- Volunteer Appreciation Week!
- Community events
- News from Management Team
- City Greenways

Up Coming events:

Tuesday April 4, 2006

Book Club

This time we will be reading *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey
See Sara for a copy of the book.

Wednesday April 5, 2006

5:00-7:30

Power of Women to Women

Come and bring your ideas to this group.

Thursday April 6 and 20, 2006

2:00-4:00

DEWC Advocacy Workshops

Join Barb and Liza for this workshops

Friday April 21, 2006

1:00 pm

Outing to the park

A time to visit with mother earth as part of our wellness series

Monday April 24, 2006

5:00-7:30.

DEWC Community Kitchen

April 25, 2006

12:00- 3:00

DEWC Spring Dinner

News from Management Team

April 1, 2006 is the beginning of the DEWC fiscal (involving financial matters) year. This means that all our records, accounts and funding goes from April 1, 2005 until March 31, 2006. We begin a new year with a new budget and we get a chance to review the past year to see what we have accomplished and how we have done – did we spend the Women's Centre money well, did we over spend or did we save.

The other day someone said that we are too preoccupied with money, when the kitchen staff tell us that the dishwasher is not working we think to ourselves 'Can we afford to get it fixed?' When the volunteers ask for more incentives, our response is 'Can we afford it?' Money is the way that government control people especially people who have no or little power or the desire to exercise their power over others. Aboriginal land was stolen because of money. Women are sexually exploited for money or the lack of it. When we focus on money we become an arm of the government and part of the evil that is a preoccupation of money.

In some way we control YOUR money. We are outsiders from the community, well educated and privileged, yet we are the ones who make the decisions in the Centre. We saw how 'bad' people can take advantage of the Centre. In this era we cannot get away from the false importance of money – it can buy happiness, just like the government sells the resources of the land, the air and the water business has put a price on happiness. We can share the responsibility in handling the Centre affairs. In May, after all the financial information has been accumulated, we will have meetings to discuss how money was spent last year and how it should be spent this year. In April we will be hosting a Women's Voice meeting for individuals to share their experiences, observations and perceptions of the operations of the Centre. We invite everyone who uses the Centre to attend so that together we continue to build the Centre.

**WOMEN'S VOICE
TALKING CIRCLE
Thursday April 20, 2006
5:00 – 7:00**

ADVOCACY WORKSHOOPS AT THE DEWC

Come join us this spring for two new workshops brought to you by Barb and Liza. Our first workshop on April 6th will be information on the Residential Tenancy Act and how it applies to you. The second will be on April 20th On Disability Benefits Applications. The workshops will take place from 2 to 4. We will meet upstairs and then go downstairs, please bring all of your questions. Hope to see you there!

The Premier of the play **“PEOPLE LIKE YOU”**.

Sunday April 30th

2:00 p.m.

The Russian Hall

600 Campbell Street

Admission is by donation

Transportation to this event will be provided by DEWC

This performance is by a troupe of women called The Positives. It is a Simon Fraser University project that has been developed in Surrey.

POWER of Women to Women Project

I was hired last month to coordinate this new and exciting initiative at the DEWC, which will happen over the next year or so. I come from a varied background with lots of experience working from a strengths building, bi-cultural approach when doing community work so I'm hoping that my skills, passion and experience will come in handy.

This project is funded to support our individual and collectives voices around the issues which impact and affect our lives. It's an opportunity to come together, to learn from one another and understand the issues and how they impact us in different ways. This project has an iterative element, meaning that women will get to identify, prioritize and strategize their response to issues that affect them. (as well as engage in actions towards making things better)

AND WHAT DOES THAT ALL MEAN!!!!?

The POWER project will include:

- Weekly group starting on Wednesday April 5th at 5 pm. This group will start with a shared meal and will last about 3 hours.
- Popular education model of working, meaning that even though I'm the coordinator, my real role is that of facilitation, with all involved being "teachers" to one another.
- Events we will organize by ourselves (DEWC), or in partnership with other allies. Something like the "Carole Taylor Shoe-in" hosted at Carnegie on March 27th is a good example
- Supporting members to be active on Boards and other groups, so that DEWC membership has a concrete voice at these tables and so members gain or enhance their own personal skills.
- Create new networks focused on social justice, women's equality and social change.
- Work on the newsletter, along with staff to make the publication more useful to the DEWC members.

I'm looking forward to learning from and with any members who are interested in action and social justice. Please join me on the 5th of April at 5 pm to begin what you think is needed, and what interests you in this realm.

A special thanks to all of the women who have opened their lives and hearts to me over the past 6 weeks while I was filling in as a Peer Support Staff member. I felt very welcomed, and have been honoured by your words and guidance while learning the ropes around here!

ALL MY RELATIONS,
Mary

DEWC TAIKO DRUMMING

We meet to learn about taiko drumming,
we exercise, work together and enjoy.



All participants are expected to be on time and contribute to all aspects of the group including the making of meals, clean up, moving the drums, warm up and wrap up.

Wednesday April 5

Friday April 14

Friday April 21

Friday April 28

Doors close at 5:30

Drumming starts at 5:45

Drumming ends at 7:30

The objectives for this group are:

- Exercise and music development with a group
- Performance opportunities to build self confidence and presence of women in the community
- Develop team building and peer support abilities among the group

VOLUNTEERS GROW COMMUNITY

Thank-you Women Centre Volunteers!

National Volunteer Week: April 23-29, 2006

National Volunteer Week is a special time set aside in April to honor the women who give their time and energy to the women of the centre. The Week also raises awareness of the vital contribution volunteers make to our broader community.

What is volunteering?

It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is a gift to the community.

By caring and contributing to change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self-esteem, and change their lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbours and, in return, enhance their own.

Volunteers grow community.

Why do people volunteer?

Many women say they want to volunteer to give back to the Women's Centre. Many women say they want to volunteer to get away from things that go on outside the Centre like drugs and drinking. Some volunteers also want to take part in educational workshops to learn more skills and increase opportunities for finding paid work. People make contacts, learn skills, gain work experience, build self-esteem, improve their health, sometimes find paying jobs and sometimes turn their lives around through volunteer work.

What is the importance of voluntary activity in the Centre?

Volunteers are the wheels that make this Centre run. Volunteers work on the floor, in the clothing room and kitchen, on the front desk, at the Bingo. They provide practical assistance to women and often provide an ear to listen and sometimes a shoulder to cry on. They bring warmth and humor to our Centre. And, while volunteerism provides volunteers themselves with a great feeling of satisfaction, it can also provide unmet needs in the community and the organization of services to meet them.

What are some tips to getting started as a volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering, but aren't sure where to begin, think about where you'd like to volunteer or who you'd like to volunteer with. To become a volunteer at the Women's Centre come out to a Volunteer Orientation (first Sunday of every month) at 3:00pm. It's a chance to learn and ask questions and see if we might be the right fit for you.

Is volunteering a two-way street?

Volunteering is a two-way street. Not only do the recipients of voluntary action benefit, but so, too, do the volunteers. Volunteering provides a satisfying outlet for people's talents, ambitions, and concerns in ways that are different from their regular daily responsibilities.

The importance of volunteers to nonprofit agencies is obvious. Volunteers can often make the difference in whether an agency survives, since the hours that volunteers contribute are often as valuable if not more as donations of money.

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

LUNCH SERVED
DAILY AT 12:30-1:45

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.

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.

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

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOP

Art Therapy with CARES - and 8 week program

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

Crafts every Monday- 10am.

Painting- with materials supplied- every Thursday - 2:00 pm.

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

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

Beading- Every Friday at 2:00pm.

Ceramics- Every Monday from 10-12

EVENING PROGRAMMING

Power(women2women)-Education model working to establish a core group for social justice and other activities from 5-8:00

Music Jam- Sing and play instruments with Reta and Leona.

Always a week before welfare day from 5-8:00

Community Kitchen- come and learn new recipes 'share your cooking expertise with everything supplied- Always a Monday before welfare day.

Women's Health Clinic-on going 59 West Pender

Batter Women Support Services- Support for women experiencing violence.

Taiko Drumming-Learn to play big drums and train to perform.

Healing Circle-Every Thursday except welfare week.

SUNDAY 12:00-5:00*	MONDAY 10:00-5:00*	TUESDAY 10:00-5:00*	WEDNESDAY 11:00-5:00*	THURSDAY 10:00-5:00*	FRIDAY 10:00-5:00*	SATURDAY 12:00-5:00*
						1 2:00 Video 2:00 computer
2 1:30: Resumes 2:00 Video 3:30 Intake Orientation for New volunteers	3 10:00 CWS 10:00 Ceramics 11:00 Yoga	4 10:00 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas 2:00: Bingo 5:00 BWSS	5 1:30 Sweat Lodge 2:00 Crochet 5:00 pow2w 5:00 Taiko	6 2:00 Advocacy Workshop 2:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle	7 10:00 Art (CARES) 2:00 Beading	8 2:00 Video 2:00 computer
9 1:30: Resumes 2:00 Video	10 10:00 CWS 10:00 Ceramics	11 10:00 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas 2:00: Bingo 5:00 BWSS	12 1:30 Sweat Lodge 2:00 Crochet 5:00 pow2w	13 2:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle	14 Good Friday Centre opens 12:00-5:00 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko	15 2:00 Video 2:00 computer 5:00 Music Jam
16 1:30: Resumes 2:00 Video	17 Easter Monday Centre opens 12:00 - 5:00	18 10:00 Massage & Sewing 12-2 Street Nurse 1:30 deyas 2:00: Bingo 3:30 Book Club 5:00 BWSS	19 1:30 Sweat Lodge 2:00 Crochet 5:00 pow2w	20 2:00 Advocacy Workshop 2:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle 5:00 women's voice	21 10:00 Art (CARES) 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko	22 2:00Video 2:00 computer
23/30 1:30: Resumes 2:00 Video	24 10:00 CWS 10:00 Ceramics 5:00 Community Kitchen	25 Spring Dinner 12:00-3:00	26 1:30 Sweat Lodge 2:00 Crochet 5:00 pow2w	27 CENTRE CLOSED	28 10:00 Art (CARES) 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko	29 2:00Video 2:00 computer

* PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS OPEN UNTIL 5:00 PM BUT DOORS WILL BE LOCKED AT 4:45



NOTES FROM THE KITCHEN:

It has been six weeks now since we –Stephanie and Ruth- began in the kitchen here at the DEWC as the Kitchen Trainers. Since we started our days have been very full! There has been much to learn – the timing of the meals, coffee and ovens; many names and faces; how to get along with the dishwashing machine and much more! In the midst of all this, we get to work, thankfully, with a terrific group of volunteers and great staff.

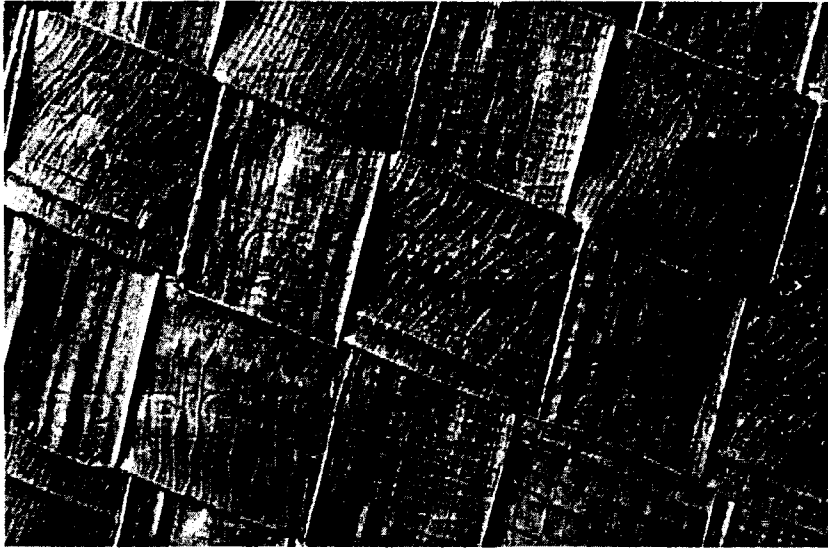
Now that we have started to develop some patterns and routines we are turning our attention toward developing the kitchen training program. We hope to have big pieces in place in the next 4 to 6 months. Our goal is to provide some exciting opportunities in terms of hands-on training and work experience for the existing volunteers and for other women who are interested in kitchen and culinary work.

So in the next while please share with us your hopes and thoughts about the kitchen training program. Introduce yourself if you haven't already and let us know if there are specific things you would like to see in the newsletter from the kitchen.

Oh.....and please, please, please DO NOT take mugs from the centre-you may have noticed we are experiencing a chronic shortage!!!!!!!

Yikes!

From RUTH



We have started some new arts and crafts workshops to support comments we have gotten from women – more craft workshops.

WEAVE

Get involved and let's come together and make something of this project.

Women Engaged in the Arts – Vision and Empowerment

We will collaborate with Coast Salish artist Rose Spahan to share skills, experience and visions; such as art techniques, art history, history of colonialism, Women's Rights, personal experience, life history, survival and resistance. To showcase work by women of the community is a political act. This gives voice to women's experience and vision of the world, a voice which is often ignored and silenced. The process of self reflection through art has important values and the public recognition of women's work, voices and visions through exhibitions has impact on self esteem, collective consciousness and public awareness. The objective of the project is to:

- Have creative opportunities in the Centre for women – workshops and groups
- Have opportunities for women to exhibit their artwork, and
- Have opportunities for women to make some money from their artwork.

Upcoming activities:

Art Exhibition of women's art work – October 2006, December 2006 & January 2007

Crafts table for sales of women's artwork – August, September & December

Artist presentations of accomplished women artist

Weekly activities:

Monday – Ceramics

Tuesday - Sewing

Wednesday - Crochet

Thursday - Painting

Friday - Beading

Community:

The Mobile Access Project (MAP) would like to invite the women of the Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre to visit our new van.

MAP is out 7 nights a week from 10pm-5:30 am. We are a peer driven project, providing supplies, referrals and support to women sex trade workers in Vancouver. Some things we supply are condoms, needles, bad date sheets and coffee. MAP is a place you can take a quick break and have a chat, report a bad date, and ask about other services in Vancouver.

Come check us out on April 11th at 12:30 in front of the Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre and see what we're all about.

Vancouver Public Library Presents: *Writing Thrillers*

Wednesday April 5, 2006

7:00 P.m.

Carnegie Centre, Theatre

401 Main St.

Admission is free All are welcome

How does an award-winning writer of stage musicals turn his hand to writing thrillers? Join John MacLachlan Gray as he discusses the transition from writing for the stage to authoring critically acclaimed thrillers.

The Vancouver-Richmond Mental Health Network invites you to their Spring Party

Saturday , April 15, 2006

3:00pm to 7:00 pm

Croatian Cultural Centre 3250 Commercial Drive, Vancouver

C GUIDELINES, RULES or JUST A PHILOSOPHY?

I've been lucky in my life in that I've had many beautiful teachers. I thank each and everyone of them, especially those who have introduced my Aboriginal heritage to me. Understanding my cultural heritage has been a big part of my life over the past fifteen years.

So from this view I'd like to restate our guidelines as I find that this type of list works best for me. (I'll respond better to things that show me WHAT to do, not ones which tell me NOT to do something!)

#1 Respect is key to all relationships including the ones each of us has with ourselves and our own personal history. When we name-call, judge or dis-regard a person because of a real or perceived difference, we show disrespect to them but also to ourselves and our family. So this means.....

- No name-calling, or other remarks about another women's size, cultural, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or other differences, are not welcome for any reason.
- No one has the right to take another's belongings

#2 Food at the DEWC is part of what we need for our lives—our medicines and is also part of our social and spiritual connection to each other. By sharing food and eating together in the centre, we are connecting together in a different way. Those that prepare the food make it healthy by following health guidelines, but also by creating meals with love and kindness in their hearts which is the proper way to prepare food for others. So this means....

- Don't take food which belongs to another woman, even if she's sleeping or "out of it". We ensure that we have food for one meal for each women each day.
- Don't take food outside of the centre, as it is prepared for women to eat, here, communally.
- Provide feedback to the Kitchen staff on the food prepared and respect the one meal rule for all as the lunch time is very busy with about 220 women eating lunch each day.

#3 We all need and deserve peace and a place of sanctuary in order to live our lives fully. At the DEWC we want our space to be open to any women or child needing us. We also want the centre to remain a sanctuary. So this means.....

- No drugs or alcohol allowed in the Centre
- Yelling or other verbal abuse is not tolerated
- Fighting or physical abuse is not allowed.
- Conflict needs to be kept outside of the Centre, especially if that's where it comes from

If we try and remember that each of us contributes to the circle, and that we can create a solid, supportive one, or one which is just a circle in shape but not form or function!

City Greenways – As defined by the City of Vancouver

The proposed City Greenways network of sixteen routes will be approximately 140 km long when complete. As a result of the legacy of the Seawall portion of the Seaside Route, 30% of the network was already in place before construction of the first route began. Street rights-of-way will make up approximately 50% of the network. Goals of a City Greenway are:

- *Make walking more interesting*
- *Make cycling safer and more convenient*
- *Reduce the impact of the car*
- *Make the Greenway 'greener'*
- *Use public art to make the Greenway more interesting*

There are 2 greenways planned for our neighbourhood, one on Alexander Street (from Main St. to Water St.) and one on Carrall (from False Creek all the way to Crab Park!). Last month representatives from the DEWC attended a meeting regarding the Carrall Street Greenway and we also hosted a meeting for the Alexander Street Greenway right here at the Centre.

We want to make sure that women's concerns, vision and interest are reflected in these initiatives. It is not sufficient for there to be 'CONSULTATION', when plans are already underway. We want to know that women from the community will be paid to work on these projects – construction and 'beautification', that art from women in the community will be represented, that concerns of safety and community as women define it will be considered, that women's history be reflected, that aboriginal women's legacy and experience be included and that greenways are not separate from issues of poverty, violence, abuse and exploitation that women experience every day!

If you are interested to be the DEWC rep. on these matters please speak to Cynthia. The responsibilities include;

- Keeping in touch with City representatives and other community groups
- Representing the Centre at meetings – advocating for women in the community
- Reporting to back to the Centre members by writing an article in the newsletter

To Staff Volunteers and Members:

My name is Wilhelmina Miles and I am a volunteer in the Women's Centre. I would like to say hello and welcome to the new staff. You will find that this Women's Centre is GREAT. However, we are not so great that it cannot be improved.

It is sometimes hard to accept change even change for the better. Growing can be hurtful at times so we must be flexible, and able to adapt to new situations. We probably cannot turn back the clock nor can we wish the old familiar faces to reappear in their past positions.

That said, I would like to address the issue of Noise at the centre. Of course noise and sound is a part of life and living. Sometimes too much noise can be irritating. It can create an atmosphere not conducive to our sanctuary from the world of the street in stressful situations.

The volunteers are expected to be "role models" to maintain a calm, composed exterior. However, if staff give in to needless yelling-because they have not found "the way" to be in their jobs yet both volunteers and staff jobs are made more difficult .

Women are strong we think we have to be, but we are human. If everyone tries a little harder to stay calm , be brave and watch for the signs we will succeed.

All my relations,

Wilhelmina Miles



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

Look at the front desk for
date and time for our April
volunteer Appreciation Event.