

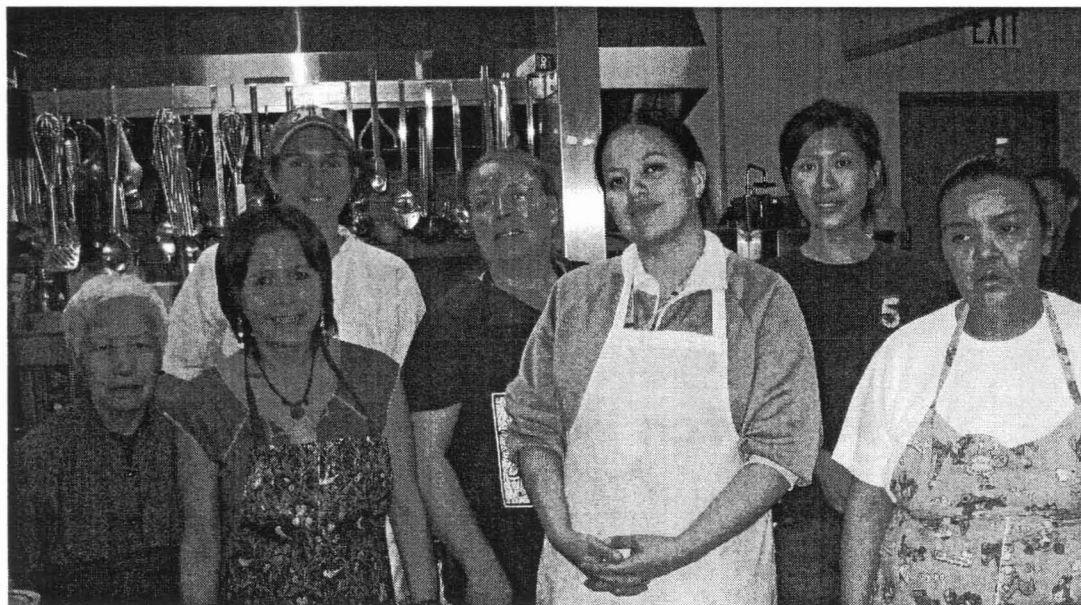
D.E.W. DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

Free

June 2007

Our Wonderful Food Service Team – just a few of many!



Hang, Laura, Ruth, Heather, Trina, Elaine and Elizabeth
Thank you so much for the wonderful meals and snacks!

INSIDE:

- Chinese Women's Group Information
- Calendar of events/workshops
- POW2W Group Information
- Women's Reflections
- Darcey's Story

Upcoming events:

Sunday June 3, 2007 3:30

Volunteer Meeting

All volunteers currently in the program
are encouraged to attend.

Wednesday June 6, 2007 1:00 - 2:00

Strathcona Mental Health Team at DEWC

Karen and Christine will be at the Centre to answer
questions regarding accessing mental health resources.

Friday June 8, 2007 2:00

Rally for Women's Housing

Meet at the DEWC at 2:00 pm to participate in the rally.

Monday June 11, 2007 TBA

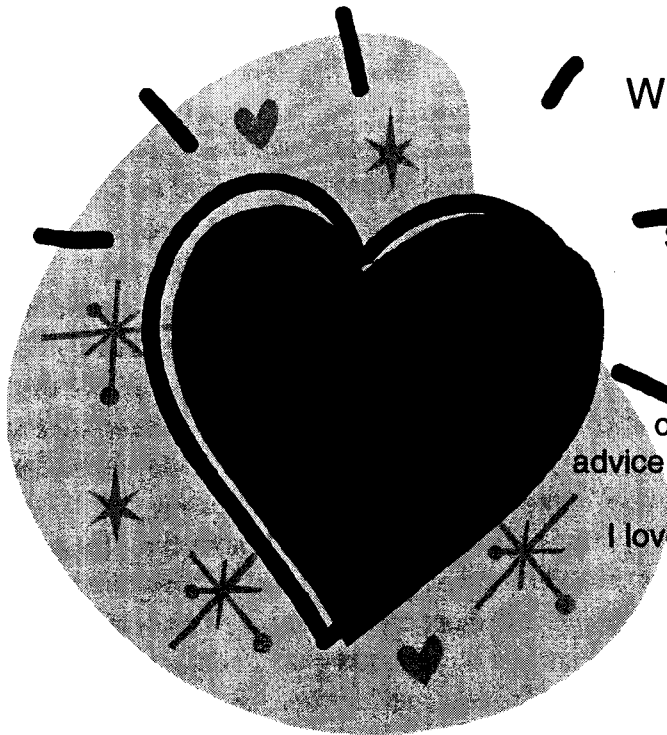
**Visit from Honorable Bev Oda,
Minister of the Status of Women**

Will be at the Centre to make a grant funding announcement.

Sunday June 17, 2007 5:00-7:00

DEWC Community Kitchen

Join Ruth and Linda and make BLT's!



LOVING' THE CENTRE WINNER THIS MONTH IS... ROSEMARY GLADUE

She has won a \$25 gift certificate to
Save On Foods.

Here is what some people wrote:
The Centre offers me support,
options to issues, solutions/referrals,
advice, warmth and a feeling of belonging.

I love the Centre because it enabled me
to re-establish ties to my family and
renew old friendships and make
new ones. Not to mention services
like the clothing room, shower
and staff who are so patient.

The BEST thing I LOVE about the Centre. No matter how;

- a) drunk
- b) stoned
- c) sad
- d) sick

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME
AND THERE IS HELP.
UNLESS...YOU ACT LIKE
AN IDIOT!

I LOVE THE CENTRE. The Centre provides food and clothing for the hungry
and the poor. Provides opportunities like volunteering, skills and opportunities to
do arts and crafts and lets me be a part of the team and community and also be
accepted and liked.

You are a winner!

And you may win a \$25 Gift Certificate to Future Shop.
All you have to do is to tell us why you love the Centre.

Write it on a piece of paper or get someone to help you, put it in the
red box by the elevator. We will select a winner on June 20th!

Dear Wihelmina,

Thank you so much for your insightful letter. Your spirit is exactly what we hope for at the Centre, you are thoughtful, caring, insightful, generous, constructive and strong in your criticisms and observations. This is the way we learn from each other and care for each other. Our lives here at the Centre, staff, members or volunteers are complex and extremely rewarding. It can certainly be stressful, however, regardless of the conditions it is never appropriate for staff to cross a woman's boundaries or behave aggressively towards women. The expectations of staff are much higher because we get paid, we do have power and we are expected to be self conscious about our role here and elsewhere in the world. I work here because the Centre has given me a wonderful chance to learn about myself and be the person I want to be. I am often unsuccessful as I put all my experiences into the incredibly diverse situations that women of the Centre have faced. I personally have crossed a woman's physical boundary by hugging her and touching her inappropriately. Affection and physical touching is a characteristic of my family culture, now as adults my sisters and I still hold hands and we hug frequently. I really upset a woman of the Centre when I hugged her in an attempt to comfort her, she was a victim of sexual abuse. I learnt something very precious, that is to be aware of my own needs - in this case I needed comfort in light of this woman's crisis! I also learnt how to read a situation to appropriately support women who have different experiences and needs.

Most of us come from a history where someone/everyone wants us to be or do things we do not want to be or do. We also come from a society that is fond of punishing people. As we unlearn these behaviours and attitudes we will no doubt make mistakes. Be assured that at the Centre staff are held accountable for their actions and behaviours. If a staff member yells at anyone and/or treats women with disrespect we take it very seriously. Staff's role at the Centre is to support women, it is not our role to 'take care' of people but to help them help themselves. We can do this without falling back on bad habits of yelling and threatening. At the Centre we try to work with each other to try and understand why individuals may react in a particular way and we work together to learn, of course this is not always successful as we hope but we try!

If there are any concerns regarding staff please do not hesitate to speak to either Alice or Cynthia, I hope that you can trust us to act in the best interest of the Centre.

Sincerely, Cynthia Low

WOMEN'S REFLECTIONS (a beautiful letter from a member)

In October, Caren wrote a wonderful letter which was published in the DEWC Newsletter. It recapped the progress of the then "New Staff Members" and their growing abilities in coping with the difficult situations (in the emergency shelter) and their difficult positions in general. **Working together** were the key words. Thanks Caren.

Somewhere or maybe when the pressure was on from the lack of funding and the brave decision to shelter the homeless women things began to deteriorate.

Fund is fun - however sometimes it masks stress and strain from overwork and too much responsibility.

We do not want to create a society of women who use each other the same way men have done for ages.

Power can be very seductive and staff virtually have the power of life and death in their hands.

** This letter was received from a Centre member in January 2007, apologies for the lateness in printing the letter as it was left in a mailbox that is not checked regularly. If there are any concerns please speak to Cynthia.*

I believe we are on the right track. We got the TEAM and we are on the BEAM.

Small things like inappropriate sexual touching - even in fun may disturb a person who has a history of molestation. The last thing we want to do.

Also you all have heard "You get more bees with honey than with vinegar." A kind quiet word may sometimes achieve a better result than all the yelling in the world. We are dealing with adults - with adult problems. Hard to remember at times.

All my relations,
Wihelmina

2007 STREET PARTY? TO PARTY OR NOT!

The DEWC is seeking your input on the Street Party.

As our members will remember, the Street Party began in 2004 as a way to celebrate our journeys, particularly after a turbulent time in the Centre's history. We have continued the tradition of the Street Party for several years.

This year we are concerned about available resources (finances, time, capacity)- it costs about \$10,000, especially with the operation of the night time shelter - to have a successful Street Party this September.

So we are considering entering into a partnership with the Central City Foundation (CCF), one of Vancouver's "oldest charitable organizations established in 1907 by a group of citizens concerned about the number of homeless and hungry people living in the Gastown area of Vancouver". Some of the groups supported CCF include Catching the Spirit Youth Program, Atira, "Bridges to Understanding Project", Sereena's House, The Dugout, 411 Seniors' Centre, United We Can, Pivot Legal Society, Headline's Theatre "METH Project", and more.

They are celebrating their 100 year anniversary in 2007 and are organizing a street party for this. We are considering organizing the street party with them. Staff recommendation is that we enter into a partnership ONLY if the street party emphasize and celebrate women's journey and continue to happen on Columbia just outside the DEWC space.

CHECK THE RESPONSE THAT MAKES SENSE TO YOU
CUT OUT THE PART BELOW AND PUT INTO THE RED SUGGESTION BOX

----- CUT HERE -----

- ☐ I think it is a good idea for DEWC to enter into this partnership with Central City and it will help us put money towards ongoing services at DEWC.
- ☐ I want DEWC to organize the Street Party again at a cost of \$10,000.
- ☐ I will leave the decision to staff and board to do what is best for the Centre.

From Our Suggestion Box

The pretty red box located near the elevator

I think a Chinese class would be really helpful for those who would like to understand the Chinese ladies better. Maybe something at the Centre.

Response:

We will try find a volunteer who also speaks Cantonese who may be interested in providing Cantonese classes. At least we can provide some key phrases that people may need like:

How are you?

Welcome to the Centre.

My name is...

Etc.

Response:

Well women who have coffee and tea at the Centre should be cleaning up after themselves. The role of the volunteer is to assist women who use the Centre – NOT to clean up other people's messes.

PLEASE CLEAN UP AFTER
YOURSELF AND HELP EACH
OTHER KEEP THE CENTRE
LOVELY!

When a volunteer does the coffee area please keep it clean.

We desperately need representation for civil and criminal matters for women.

Response:

We lost the funding from the Law Foundation for the Legal Advocate a few years ago. There are just not enough Legal Advocates in the community. Atira, next door does have a Legal Advocate, her name is Amber Prince. We will attempt to have Amber come by to assist women. Of course the best solution would be for us to work towards reinstating a Legal Advocate here!

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE

302 Columbia Street, Vancouver

604.681.8480 ALL SPECIAL/NEW EVENTS ARE IN BOLD

LUNCH SERVED

DAILY AT 12:30-1:45

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Massage: Every Tuesday from 10-12

Street Nurses: Christina or Liz

Sweat Lodge: Every 2nd Wednesday, Elder Reta will take women to the Lodge, meet at the Centre at 11:30

Resume Workshop: Create your own resume with the help of a practicum student

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS

Painting: Monday's and Thursday's with Rose

Crochet with Anna & Freeda: Every Wednesday at 2:00

Sewing Circle with Freeda: Every Tuesday at 10:00

Beading with Leona: Every Friday at 2:00pm

Karaoke: Sing a tune with Reta and Jem, every second Wednesday from 2:00-4:30

EVENING PROGRAMMING

Tuesdays: Grief and Loss Group - Support for women going through changes and loss of all kinds, relationships, community, family, children, etc.

Tuesdays: Battered Women Support Services

Support for women experiencing violence
Community Kitchen- Once a month, come out to make a meal together and pack some for home. All ingredients provided

Wednesdays: POW2W - Social justice group and other activities from 5-8

Fridays Taiko
Thursdays: Healing Circle - Except the day after Welfare

Fridays: Taiko Drumming - For anyone who would like to learn taiko and perform

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 Beading 5:00 Taiko	2 2:00 Video
3 10:00 CHODDAR 1:00 CWRG 2:00 Bingo 3:00 Resumes 3:30 Volunteer Meeting	4 10:00 Drawing & Painting	5 10:00 M/S 10:00 Welfare App. 12:00 Street Nurse 3:15 Grief & Loss 5:00 BWSS	6 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	7 10:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle	8 2:00 Beading 2:00 Rally for Women's Housing	9 2:00 Video
10 10:00 CHODDAR 1:00 CWRG 2:00 Bingo 3:00 Resumes	11 10:00 Drawing & Painting	12 10:00 M/S 10:00 Welfare App. 12:00 Street Nurse 3:15 Grief & Loss	13 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	14 10:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle	15 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko (OPEN)	16 2:00 Video
17 10:00 CHODDAR 1:00 CWR 2:00 Bingo 3:00 Resumes 5:00 Community Kitchen	18 10:00 Drawing & Painting 7 - 10 SHELTER MEETING	19 10:00 Sewing 10:00 Welfare App. 12:00 Street Nurse 3:15 Grief & Loss	20 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	21 10:00 Painting 5:00 Healing Circle	22 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko (OPEN)	23 2:00 Video
24 10:00 CHODDAR 1:00 CWRG 2:00 Bingo 3:00 Resumes 6:00 - 11:00 WISH	25 10:00 Drawing & Painting	26 10:00 Sewing 10:00 Welfare App. 12:00 Street Nurse 3:15 Grief & Loss 5:00 BWSS	27 CLOSED	28 10:00 Painting	29 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko (OPEN)	30 2:00 Video

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

EMERGENCY SHELTER MEETING

The DEWC would like to host a meeting for women who use the emergency shelter to talk about how it is going, what works well, what we can improve on, etc. The goal is to use this information so that the 412 and other emergency shelters can ensure that the service is appropriate and fits the needs of women in the community.

FOR WOMEN WHO USE THE SHELTER ONLY

Monday June 18, 7 – 10:00

Dinner served at 7:00

Doors close at 7:45 for meeting

Special treats and gift bags!

Some issues to be discussed and decide upon;

- Drug use in the smoking area – there is no using in the shelter but women have been using in the area designated for smoking.
- Barring and other policies
- We also want to know what kinds of housing would work for women who are currently using the Shelter
- We want this shelter to work for the women who need it most so your ideas and opinions matter.

News from the Management Team

As you may know housing is a serious need in our community especially GOOD women's only housing. Over the past few months the Management Team has dedicated considerable time to address this need. We have had to start and operate an Emergency Shelter – something that is completely new to us. This includes everything from securing a location, installing security devices, storage, food storage, approaching different partners and keeping them happy, to making sure there are enough blankets, tampons and shampoo. New staff have been hired and trained to work 365 days a year! There have been calls at 2am, 4am and 6am and crazy allegations of staff kicking women out. Women do get barred if they are a danger to other women in the shelter. Dealing with these issues are the most difficult. Every night up to 56 women use the shelter, there is much to do! If you have any concerns regarding the Centre and the Shelter please do not hesitate to speak to Alice or Cynthia.

While we are busy with the day to day operations we also have to work hard to convince the public and government of the situation. We also meet with other women's organizations to advocate for housing for women. This is not enough, because sometimes we get solutions that really do not appropriately address the need. Over the next few months we are going to work directly with women who need housing, women who provide services, non-profit housing groups and government to come up with some specific recommendations. We know supportive housing is essential but we also want funders to know exactly what kinds of supports are relevant, appropriate and effective. This should include;

- Adequate staff to resident ratio;
- Direct capacity building and peer supports;
- On site alcohol and drug addiction supports;
- On site mental health supports;
- Anti violence counselling, and;
- Integrate community spaces for social networking.

It can be a frustrating process and one that women's organizations have walked many many times without good outcomes. Regardless we cannot give up hope and we cannot be silent.

A reminder that Honorable Bev Oda, the Federal Minister of Heritage and Status of Women will be visiting the Centre to make a presentation on the funding received from the government to continue the Power of Woman to Woman Group. We hope that our members will take the opportunity to show her a warm Centre welcome. This is also an excellent opportunity for us to share our concerns regarding housing, poverty and inequality.

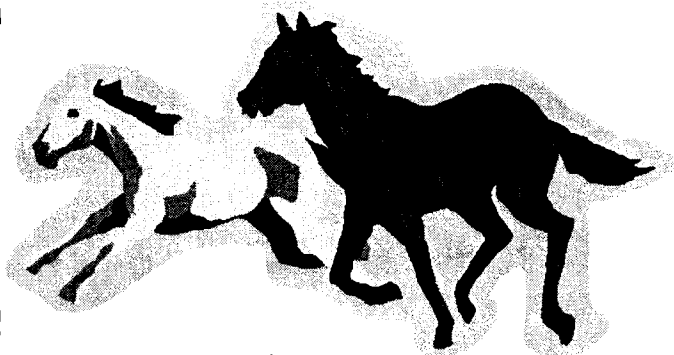
CHINESE WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUP



We have formed a new group for Chinese women at the Centre called the Chinese Women's Rights Group. We meet every Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00. We meet to share stories, provide mutual support, learn about our rights and do activities together. We welcome all Chinese women to take part in the group. The group is facilitated by Peggy Lee who was a community organizer in Hong Kong and a UBC student.

Darcey's Easter Family Reunion

I grew up in Devon Alberta, which is forty five minutes outside of Edmonton. There are lots of cows, horses, cats, dogs and snow in my town. I left Devon when I was 28, to live in Vancouver where I started working with mental health, special needs adults and the deaf. For many years I had my own company which I called Hindmancraftcorner, where I provided arts and craft workshops for adults with special needs. During this time, I thought of home a lot and wondered when I would be able to go back and see my family and friends and ride the horses.



In April, I had the opportunity to go home for Easter and while I was on the plane all I could think about was seeing my family and shopping! My mother picked me up and took me back to her house, which is not the same house I grew up in and have my childhood memories of. My sister Jojo was waiting there for me to take me to the West Edmonton Mall for shopping. My family is centered around food and there is a pizza place in Devon called Florida Pizza which has the best pizza in Alberta. Put it this way, when my brother is on the Highway coming from Calgary, he calls ahead and orders the pizza. So my first dinner with my family was a pizza party and all my family came from all over Alberta to see me. We had Easter dinner the following day and surprised my mom the day after with a sixtieth birthday party! My mother collects dolls so my dad got her a Pocahontas doll and a carriage for it, while us kids got her a digital picture frame and a bracelet. It was great to see her so happy! She loved the fact that all her kids were there with her. My trip was only for six days and I was really happy there, but I was missing my family here. Vancouver is my home now and I love the work I do, working here with the women.

Darcey

412 EMERGENCY SHELTER

412 Shelter staff - Collette and Caren



Hello to everyone at the DEWC. We are finally in our new space at 412 East Cordova , and the women of the shelter are very happy in there new space.

We now have showers, laundry, inflatable mattresses to sleep on, and the best part is there are

three different sleeping areas so the women are not all crammed into one space. There is also a separate dining area so women who wish to get up and socialize can do that without disturbing the sleeping women. Our hours of operation are from 11:00 pm to 8:00 am however there is no entry after 2:00 pm so if you wish to stay with us you must be at the shelter before 2:00 am. If you need to reach us by phone you can call us at 604-715-8480.

POWER OF WOMEN TO WOMEN PROJECT AND EVENING GROUP

The Power of Women to Women Project is a social justice project aimed to empower us to create social change in our lives and communities. Some of the topics we discuss in the evening group as part of the Project are homelessness, violence, poverty, media, colonialism, policing, government structures, the economy, and much more.

We try to understand how these different systems and structures affect our lives. We also discuss ways to strengthen ourselves collectively so we can act and be heard in transforming these structures.

This is currently an open group that meets on Wednesday evenings and the Sunday after check-day from 5pm-8pm (Dinner from 5pm-6pm).

All women are welcome and bring your ideas, thoughts, and stories!

**WE ARE ALSO ORGANIZING A RALLY FOR WOMEN'S
HOUSING ON FRIDAY JUNE 8 AT 2 PM.**

**WE WILL BE LEAVING FROM THE CENTRE AFTER
LUNCH. JOIN US TO HAVE YOUR VOICE BE HEARD AND
DEMAND WOMEN'S HOUSING!**

For more information, questions, or your ideas for this project, come talk to Harsha (Sundays-Wednesdays) or email project@dewc.ca or call 604-681-8480 x 234.

WE WANT YOUR STORIES !!!

The Power of Women to Women Project is creating a website as a way for women to have their voices heard beyond the DTES by people all over Vancouver, BC, Canada, and potentially even internationally!

So write a couple of paragraphs, submit a poem, or you can even tell your story orally to Harsha who will write it out. We want to hear from you!!!

You can pick one or more of any of the following topics:

- How you came to the DTES?
- Can you share some thoughts or stories about living in the DTES?
- What you would like to see change in this neighbourhood? What do you think the government should do?
- Are there experiences with your landlord, with the police, with your family, with the welfare office, with MCFD that you would like people to know about?
- Do you have an opinion on the housing situation and lack of affordable housing, on the Olympics, on addictions, on social assistance rates, on escalating levels of violence against women, on health issues?
- If there is something you could tell people in another country about life in the DTES, what would you tell them?

The Power of Women to Women Project and website is a way for women to empower themselves and share their stories, their struggles, and their own personal vision for social change.

There is a box at the front desk to leave your stories in- (you don't have to put your name on it). Also you can talk to Harsha and she will write out your story if you want to tell it verbally.

Harsha: email project@dewc.ca or call 604-681-8480 x 234