

D.E.W. DROP IN

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
Downtown Eastside Women Do Drop In
November 2006 **Free**



DEWC 2006 – 2007 Board of Directors

INSIDE:

- Calendar of events/ workshops and outings
- Residential School Support
- Photoalbum
- Report from the Annual General Meeting

Bing & Chen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, November 3 7pm

WEAVE Opening Night

Art exhibition by women from DTES, refreshments and food.

Monday, November 6, 13, 20 & 27 5-7

Grief and Loss Support Group

Facilitated by the Living through Loss Society, meals provided.

Sunday, November 12 5-8

WEAVE - BIG Art Workshop

Collaborative art for exhibition. Meals and bus tickets provided

Saturday & Sunday, November 18 & 19 10 - 12, 2 - 4

Weaving from Art and Commerce

Learn how to weave and make your own equipment. Make gifts to sell or give away.
Contribute to a group project for exhibition.

Sunday, November 19 5 - 7

Community Kitchen

Create healthy and nutritious meals to take home.

Report from the Annual General Meeting

On October 24, 2006 about 30 women attended the DEWC Annual General Meeting and voted on a new Board of Directors. Many thanks to the 2005-06 Board for all their work last year including Marlene Trick, Josephine Watson, Bernie Williams, Mebrat Beyene, Edna Brass, Velma Paquette and Delannah Bowen.

The Board Members for the 06 – 07 year are:

Bernie Williams	Josephine Watson	Susan Duggan
Dina Amouzgar	Laurie Peltier	Velma Paquette
Donna Gorrill	Marlene George (Trick)	
Gladys Radek	Mebrat Beyene	Marr Dorvault (Elders Rep.)

An additional seat on the Board are reserved for the Volunteer representatives.

The board's responsibility is to;

- Ensure that the organization is operating consistent with our Mission and Purpose
- Ensure effective organizational planning
- Ensure adequate resources and manage those resources effectively
- Enhance the organization's public image
- Assess the organizations overall performance

In order to do this the Board of Directors has to commit to work together in the best interest of the Centre and our ALL members. They have to attend all board meetings and perform their duties in an efficient and appropriate manner.

The AGM went really well with a good report from the DEWC Auditor, Dorothy from M. Newton and Company. This year we are out of a deficit situation – meaning that we did not spend more than we brought in - although the DEWC is still carrying the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (Taxation Canada) debt incurred during 2002-04.

This year we will continue to focus on developing the drop-in program with hopes of increasing day and evening programs in partnership with other community groups and organizations. We will also pursue funding for extending hours that the Centre is open. This is something that many women have been asking for over many years. There was a time when the Centre was only open Monday to Friday, eventually we opened on weekends and now our priority is to open in the evenings. In order to do this we may have to make some difficult decisions on how to spend our resources and also to figure out when would be the priority times to be open. We will work in consultation with our members and women from the community to make this a reality.

News from the Management Team

There is some very unfortunate news for the Centre was the loss of the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (MEIA) funding for the volunteer program. Although, this is a loss of about half the volunteer program budget it does give the Centre the opportunity to redevelop the program in a way that reflects the needs of women in the community. In the meantime we will seek alternative funding for this program. As we all know, the Centre would not be able to operate the many services to women without the Volunteers. When we had a contract with MEIA there were many expectations which included management of information that they expected to get from volunteers, specific training regardless of the needs of your volunteers and other such requirements. Women from our community have specific conditions that the volunteer program should be addressing. Over the next few months we will be in discussions with the volunteers to make sure that the program will be relevant. This is a concern for every one in the Centre, we want to reassure the members, volunteers and staff that the volunteer program is an essential part of our values and philosophy and will not be eliminated. We are committed to find resources from this very important program.

AGGRESSION IN THE CENTRE!!

A cause of distress to staff, volunteers, and women in the centre is the increasing incidents of conflict and violence within the space. The Centre is a safe space for all women in the community. Women come here because they are looking for peace and quiet, they do not want to want to have to deal with conflicts and violence inside this space.

Of course, there are many reasons why it occurs - the Centre is not big enough for the numbers of women who need our services. Women are often agitated by stresses from outside, violence against them, threats, lack of food, no housing, the list is endless. The question is how to reduce the incidents of violence and conflicts without barring women from the centre. Every week the staff meet on Wednesday and every week we have to talk about women being barred from the Centre – this is not easy because we know that some women have no other place to go and their lives are already really complicated! This is particularly difficult at this time of year when it is rainy and cold. Our services are most needed now.

We can all take steps to reduce conflict. It can be as simple as taking the time to speak with each other gently, by not reacting when another woman is agitated, and by being understanding of each other. We do have to bar some women for the safety and peace of mind of other centre members, but we can do this in a mindful and compassionate way, with the help and support of all our members.

Our Chinese Seniors

The Chinese seniors that use the Centre are often talked badly too and treated as though they should not be here by some women. It is particularly distressing as these are older women who have experienced significant hardship and various forms of oppression not only individually but as a group. They use the centre for the same reason as other women – as a resource to secure basic needs and as a social space that is an alternative to the drab hotel or boarding rooms that they live in.

Women from the Chinese Women's Group that meet every Monday say they come to the Centre because they are looking for love and caring in their last days. Many of them have worked hard for many years, their families may not treat them well, they have been exploited and abused, they have lived through wars and been treated extremely badly by our government and by society.

We hear women say things like "Why don't they go to their own Centre" - even though the DEWC is for all women and we don't hear that said to other women who belong to "distinct" groups with "distinct" resources available to them.

It may be surprising to some to know that it was Chinese women who were instrumental in bringing about the Women's Centre to the DTES in 1978. This was when the DEWC was in a house on Pender Street. Chinese women have always been a significant population of the women using this space. If we want a safe and respectful place for ALL women in this community it includes our Chinese seniors. We can each challenge our own ideas and pre-judgments by reaching across (the language barrier) to women who must also survive the often harsh conditions that exist in this community.



Kisuk Kyukyit!!

Notice to Survivors of Residential School

I attended the Residential School Conference sponsored by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) held at the Wall Centre on September 11, 2006. I was in attendance for only the first day, so I am forwarding the information to all former students. The AFN is only processing the Advance Payments for all former students who are 65 years and older at this time.



Court approvals are still being held to approve the **settlement of \$10,000 for the first year and \$3,000 for each year that you attended residential school.** The hearing for BC is on October 10 - 12, 2006. Decision for the settlement will be known five months after the last court hearing date on Oct. 17, 2006. After court approval and acceptance of the Settlement Agreement by eligible former students, then the Common Experience Payment applications would be made available by Service Canada--this would most likely not be until Spring of 2007.

There is a deadline of December 31, 2006 to apply for the advance payment.

If you need more information or assistance please contact Carol, Reta or Barb at the Women's Centre.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE

IF YOU THINK YOU DO NOT WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE
COMPENSATION

IF YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR APPLICATIONS

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED FOR YOUR FAMILY

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED FOR YOURSELF

IF YOU DO NOT WANT THE MONEY

**PLEASE SPEAK TO CAROL, RETA
OR BARB**

We are woman!

We are now stronger warrior's surviving a world so cruel and vicious.

We are the world's greatest mother's,
striving to bring our children up on the red road.

We are beautiful butterfly's showing the world around us that
you can't hold us down.

We have the Miss Indian attitude showing we have the skills it takes to make it.

We are a group of beautiful fancy dancers bringing sexy back.

We are proud woman who walk with our head up high
making sure we are seen always with power.

We are happy in taking one day at a time, in our healing journey.

We are powerful battered woman showing those still struggling
that there is a life after abuse.

We walk with our hearts so full of love, not feeling the cracks that once were there.

We are the survivor's of abuse proving there can be life after death.

We walk today with a courage never felt before,
and now that we have it there's no Turning back.

We are WOMAN!

Written by
Mary L Mitchell



NEW!

Grief and Loss Support Group at the Centre

Mondays 5 - 7

Robin and Judy from the Living Through Loss Society will be facilitating a weekly support group on Mondays. This group would be open to all women in the DTES and would begin with a meal starting at 5pm. Group discussions would begin at 5:30pm. The group time would be divided into discussion/support, participants sharing about the challenges/issues they face with the losses they are dealing with and information and education.

Peace Banner at the Centre

This Peace Banner is the combined work of over 100 people from around the world who were in Vancouver for the World Peace Forum in June 2006. Terri Bidy initiated an outreach program called "Weaving a Banner for Peace" which was offered at the UBC and downtown at the Vancouver Public Library. The inspiration for the project came from two places. One is a quote from Ghandi: "Be the change you want to see in the world". This has always been an inspiration to 'Be Peace'. So when the World Peace Forum was being held, weaving seemed to be a peaceful way to share this with others. The metaphor of bringing together many hands, many colours and many threads fit the theme of peace.

The second inspiration is from the philosophy of SAORI weaving: "The SAORI way is to weave friendships as we weave fabric. SAORI bridges differences between people, and celebrates both our variety and our common humanity." (SAORI Worcester).

The finished banner is 30-feet long woven on a rainbow warp. There are many stories, wishes, dreams, hopes and prayers for peace woven throughout the banner. It is my hope that this banner will bring a feeling of peace to those who see it and that it will be the first of many Banners for Peace.

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING IN THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

Article 25(1) of the International Declaration of Human Rights provides that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of [himself] and [his] family, including food, clothing, *housing* and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstance beyond [his] control.

There are many changes underway in the Downtown Eastside community. Several buildings have been sold, developed and dismantled. Finding affordable housing continues to be a very difficult barrier for many women living and working in this area.

At DEWC the requests for support in finding housing and shelter have increased significantly. Competition for shelter space is quite high and the conditions of many shelters do not adequately meet the needs of many women. Finding affordable housing for women and families is also very challenging. Many women experience discrimination while searching for housing because of being Aboriginal, racialized, poor and income-assistance recipients. Single mothers and people with disabilities are especially at risk.

Every night at DEWC we close our doors knowing that many women from our community are homeless. Most mornings when we arrive to open the Centre, like many service locations, there are women sleeping in our doorway. Many women live in horrible housing conditions (i.e. that lack running water, are infested with pests and that are cold and wet). Hotel spaces are often very insecure and dangerous. Many residents are forced to tolerate these conditions to avoid living homeless. At this difficult time, try not to be overwhelmed with fear and hopelessness. You are not alone. Find ways to take action.

IF YOU ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF BEING HOMELESS:

- Please seek support in finding temporary housing i.e. in shelters, transition houses, recovery or other appropriate settings.
- If looking for shelter space, start early. We have a list of shelters, including some new ones for the cold weather season. These are available in our information cards to your left when entering the Centre, or enquire at the front desk.
- When calling shelters, be persistent. Find out what are the ideal times to call. You can also call back again to see if there are changes throughout the day.
- If you are wishing staff support, it is best to seek us out early in the day. It is difficult for us to assist everyone at once and we are the busiest making calls between 4pm and our 5pm closing time. Please keep in mind that between 12:30 and 1:45 peer support staff are unable to leave the drop-in space to help make phone calls.
- Try to avoid conflict when staying in a shelter – most keep detailed records and can impose long-term barrings on people who break their rules or are involved in conflict with staff or other residents.
- If you are in a short-term shelter space, immediately begin work on finding a long-term arrangement.

IF YOU THINK YOUR HOUSING MIGHT BE AT RISK, SEEK SUPPORT:

Downtown Eastside Residence Association 12 E. Hastings	604.682.0931
Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre 302 Columbia	604-681-8480
First United Church	604-681-8365
BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, Advocacy	604-872-1278 604-875-8835 TTY

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

BC tenant hotline, Mon-Thurs, 9am to 5pm	604-255-0546 1-800-665-1185
Pivot Legal Society 678 E. Hastings	604 255 9700

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

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

Massage - Every Tuesday from 10 - 12

Conversation Cafe - new group starting on June 5th from 2-4

Street Nurses, Christina or Liz, scheduled to be announced

Sweat Lodge - Every second Wednesday, Elder Reta will take women to the Lodge, meet at the Centre at 11:30.

ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS

Painting-Join Tara and the WEAVE project for all types of Art- materials supplied- every Thursday - 10:00 am. DEWC will host a Fall Art show of works so contribute your gifts.

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

Sewing Circle with Freeda- Every Tuesday morning, 10:00am.

Beading with Leona- We're Back! Every Friday at 2:00pm.

Ceramics- Every Monday from 2-4 OR 10-12

Fabric Arts with Diane - every Saturday from 2-4 p.m.

EVENING PROGRAMMING

Mondays - 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.

Wednesdays - Power of women2women - social justice group and other activities from 5-8:00

Thursdays - Healing Circle - except the day after Welfare.

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

Karaoke - Sing a tune from all the ages with Reta and Jem.

Every second Wednesday from 2-4:30

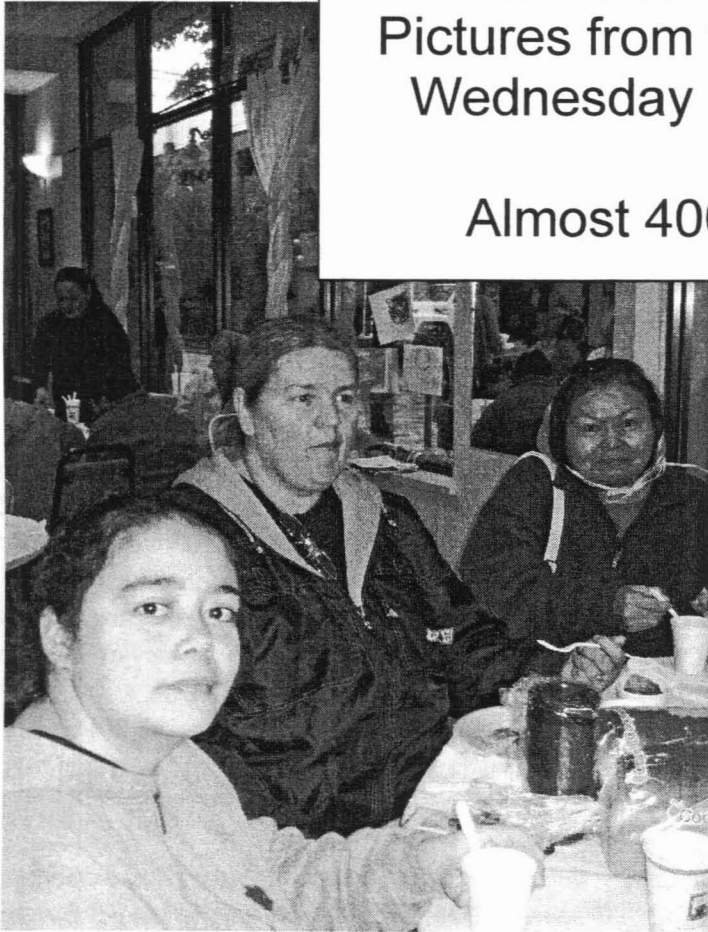
Community Kitchen - Once a month, come out to make a meal together and pack some for home. All ingredients provided

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 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	2 10:00 Painting with Tara 10:30 Upgrading 5:00 Healing Circle	3 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko CLOSED 7:00 WEAVE Gallery Gadget Opening	4 2:00 Video 2:00 Fabric Arts
5 2:00 Video	6 10:00 CWG 10:00 Ceramics 5:00 Grief and Loss Group	7 10:00 S & M 12:00 Street Nurse 2:00: Bingo 5:00 BWSS	8 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	9 10:00 Painting 10:30 Upgrading 5:00 Healing Circle	10 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko CLOSED	11 2:00 Video 2:00 Fabric Arts
12 2:00 Video 5:00 BIG Art Workshop Collaboration	13 10:00 CWS 10:00 Ceramics Painting 5:00 Grief and Loss Group	14 10:00 S & M 12:00 Street Nurse 2:00: Bingo 5:00 BWSS	15 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	16 10:00 Painting 10:30 Upgrading 5:00 Healing Circle	17 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko CLOSED	18 10:00 Weaving 2:00 Video 2:00 Weaving 5:00 Young Women and Girls Night Out
19 10:00 Weaving 2:00 Video 2:00 Weaving 5:00 Community Kitchen	20 10:00 CWG 10:00 Ceramic Painting 5:00 Grief and Loss Group	21 10:00 S & M 12:00 Street Nurse 2:00: Bingo 5:00 BWSS	22 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke	23 CENTRE CLOSED	24 2:00 Beading 5:00 Taiko CLOSED	25 2:00 Video 2:00 Fabric Arts
26 2:00 Video 5:00 POW2W <i>CK</i>	27 10:00 CWG 10:00 Ceramic Painting 5:00 Grief and Loss Group	28 10:00 S & M 12:00 Street Nurse 2:00 Bingo 5:00 BWSS	29 2:00 Crochet 2:00 Karaoke 5:00 POW2W	30 10:00 Painting 10:30 Upgrading 5:00 Healing Circle		

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

Pictures from the Harvest Dinner
Wednesday October 18, 2006

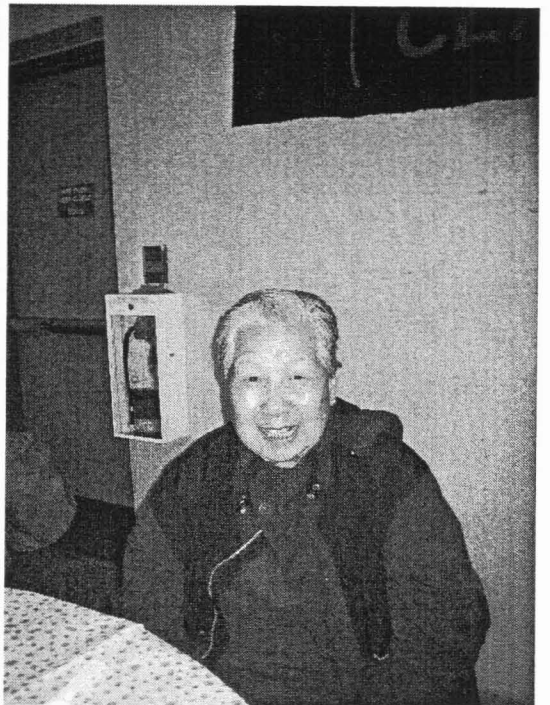
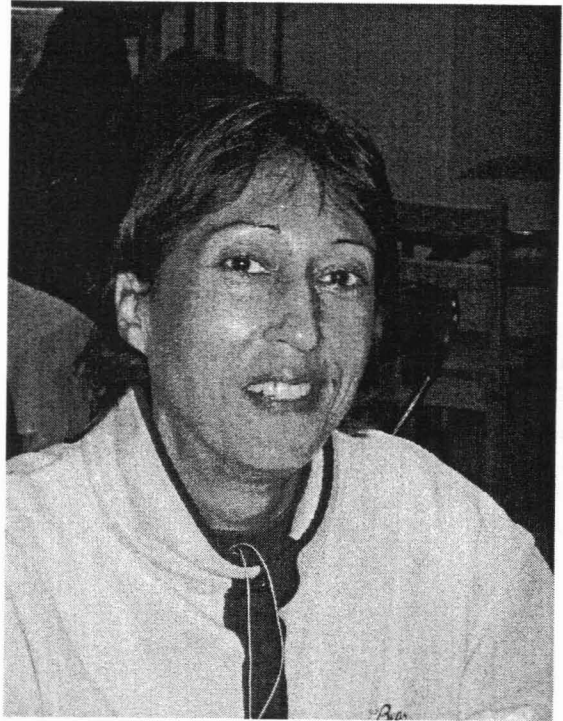
Almost 400 happy guests



Thanks to the volunteers who helped out on the day of the event Marcella, May, Sue Ilona, Freeda and Vera..

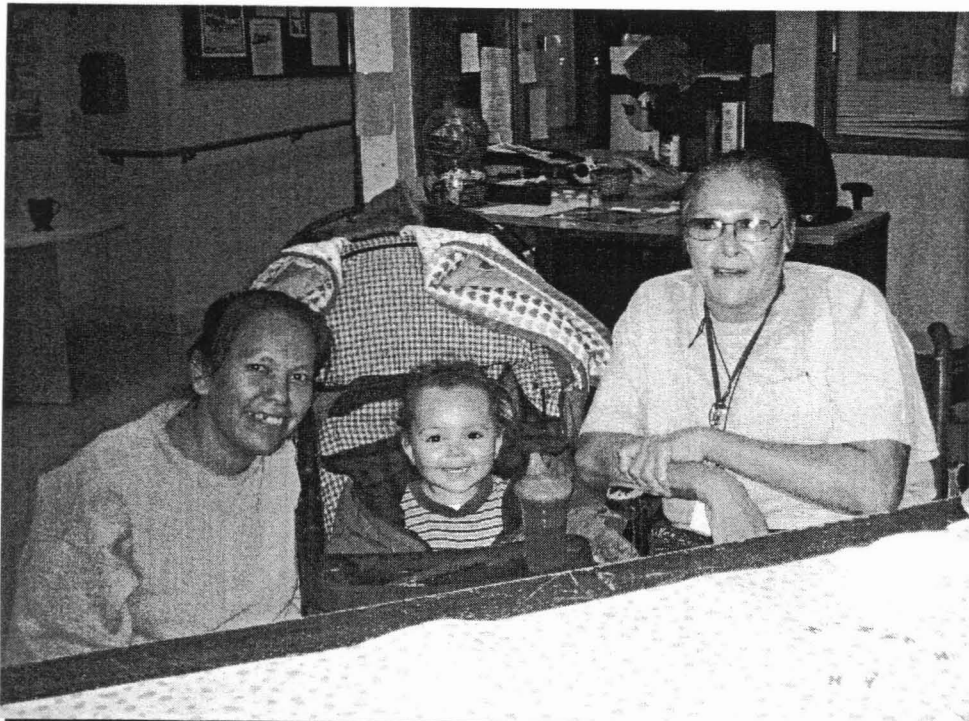
A special thanks to all the volunteers who helped in the days before, peeling potatoes, washing veggies, wrapping cutlery, etc.







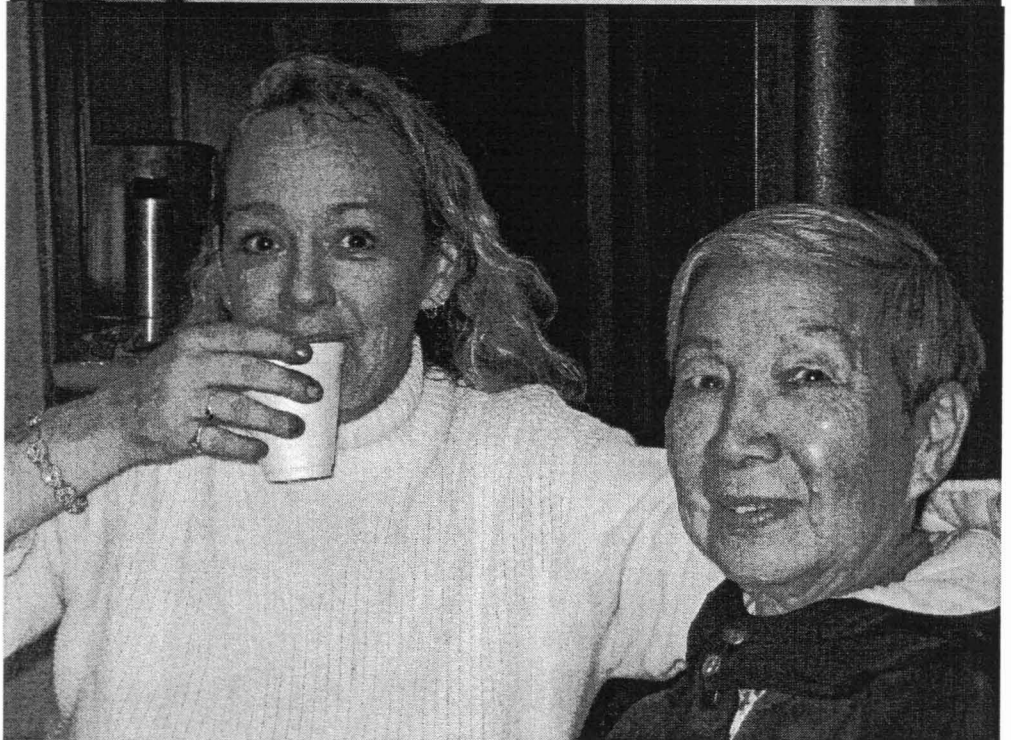






More pictures next month!





YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS NIGHT OUT AT THE DEW

For women and girls under 21

Make up, hair styling, music, crafts,
clothing and lots of freebies

**Saturday November 18, 2006
5:00 pm**

Meal Served

In partnership with Justice for Girls

UPDATE from the Power of Women to Women Group:

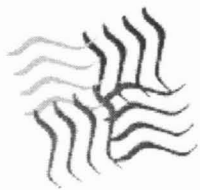
This past month has been a busy one for political organizing around housing. Women have been learning about and discussing lobby efforts at Vancouver City Hall. On October 19th, four women from our group as well as staff and board members, attended the Vancouver City Hall Standing Committee to address a proposed motion to ban SRA (SRO) conversions. Community groups were hoping the NPA dominant city council would impose a ban on converting hotels into condos, student housing and vacant buildings to stop the removal of more housing units from the area. Joan Morelli, Delannah Bowen and others from the Womens' Centre spoke eloquently in support of the ban and brought forth specific concerns from the women of this community. The NPA did not vote to support the ban and instead deferred the discussion and decision until December 14th.

The Power group and women of the Centre also participated in the "solidarity squat" organized by the Anti-Poverty Committee. Six activists from APC occupied the North Star hotel on Hastings Street at Pigeon park and created a strong media presence and public outcry around the crisis of homelessness – acknowledging that many homeless people are regularly forced to squat and the conditions of violence they have to endure. The activist squatters were arrested and released on the third day and await trial in December. Thank you to all the women who made placards and posters, distributed notices, spoke to media and demonstrated at the site during the three-day event.

Women interested in further work around housing, homelessness, welfare rates and related issues are welcome to join the Power evening group which meets every Wednesdays and on Sunday the week of check-day. All women are welcome. For updates on community organizing, events and actions – check our message board by the front desk in the DEWC drop-in, visit Cecily (Sun-Wed) or call: 604-681-8480 x234.

**“We know of course there's really no such thing as
the 'voiceless'.
There are only the deliberately silenced,
or the preferably unheard.”**

Arundhati Roy



WEAVE

Women Engaged in the Arts
Vision and Empowerment

gallerygachet

Messages of Hope and Dignity:

An Exhibition of Art by women from the Downtown Eastside

Artwork by:

Adrienne McCallum

Diane Letchuck

Helen William

Tracy Morrison

and other women from the DEWC art circles.

At Gallery Gachet, 88 E. Cordova St.

Wednesday – Sunday 12 - 6

Friday, November 3, 2006 to

Sunday, November 26, 2006

Opening Night

Friday November 3, 2006 7pm

Food and Refreshments