

What We Do: Highlights of 2015

- Our counselling services, which range from short-term crisis support to longer-term, individual trauma therapy and groups, **provided 2869 counselling sessions this year**. A variety of techniques, such as EMDR, Somatic, Narrative and Art therapy are used by our counsellors who are all trauma specialists.
- Our Skills for Healing and Building Strengths counselling groups provided clients with the necessary skills to undertake trauma therapy while waiting for individual service. These counselling groups have given us the ability to more efficiently handle the long waitlists and for clients to have more contact with VSAC while on the waitlist.
- Our Direct Client Services team provided training on working with trauma, as well as information about sexualized violence and our services, to various community organizations including; the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Royal Roads University, Victoria Brain Injury Society, South Island Counselling and Trauma Centre, Forensic Nurse Examiners, and Public Health Nurses.
- Project Respect, VSAC's prevention initiative, delivered workshops in middle-schools, high schools, alternative schools, employment-skills programs, and other community-based programs, reaching over 1000 youth in the Greater Victoria Area.
- Project Respect revamped their website (www.yesmeansyes.com) to include a blog. The website restructure has been a great way not only engage with youth on a larger scale, but also to include their voices and perspectives through social media and blogging.
- Project Respect launched its first hit music video "Respect Me Like You Do". Project Respect youth made this video to create the media they want to see in the world - media that shows diverse bodies, genders, orientations, relationships, ways of loving, and lots of consent!
- Our Trans Inclusion program brought together a group of 12 local Trans folks to develop and facilitate Trans Inclusion workshops. Through these workshops, hundreds of staff and volunteers received training at a wide range of organizations - including PEERS, the United Way Community Partners, Uvic and Need2.
- Our Community-Based Response Network brought together seven organizations: The Victoria Native Friendship Centre, The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counseling Society, Peers Resource Society, Victoria Women's Transition House, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre and the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre to develop a coordinated prevention and response to sexualized violence in Victoria, BC. The Network conducted consultations with 104 community members to identify key needs to inform the Network's strategies in building an effective community response to sexualized violence.

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OUR MISSION

The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre is a feminist organization committed to ending sexualized violence through healing, education, and prevention. We are dedicated to supporting women and all trans survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, through advocacy, counselling, and empowerment.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sean Dhillon (Co-Chair)
Kelly Branchi (Co-Chair)
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Executive Director

Find us on the Web!

www.vsac.ca
www.yesmeansyes.com

We now have a blog! Keep up-to-date at: www.vsac.ca/blog



@Victoria Sexual Assault Centre
@Project Respect - VSAC
@Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion at VSAC



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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & GRANT PROVIDERS

Vancity Community Foundation, Project Respect, Ministry of Justice – Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, Status of Women Canada, Community-based Response Network, United Way of Greater Victoria – Project Respect, Canada Summer Jobs Program - Project Respect, Horner Foundation, Food Justice, City of Victoria—Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, Provincial Employees Community Services Fund—Crisis & Information Line

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR FROM EVERYONE AT THE VICTORIA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE

Making Wishes Come True

"I think this is a wish come true for survivors."

– Lorinda Allix, Victoria Sexual Assault Centre counsellor



Lorinda Allix has been a counsellor at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) for the past 27 years.

Throughout her time here,

she has taken on many roles and been witness to a multitude of changes. Lorinda holds a lot of VSAC's history; therefore we were excited to hear her thoughts about a new chapter for the organization with the opening of the **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic**.

The Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic has been a long standing vision of VSAC and one Lorinda remembers having many "wouldn't it be great" conversations about. With the clinic now scheduled to open in early 2016, we asked Lorinda, "is this finally a wish come true for you? For the organization?" Without pausing, Lorinda immediately answered, "I think this is a wish come true for survivors."

First of its kind in BC, the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic will shift key services for recent survivors of sexual assault from the hospital and police stations to one location: the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic.

This clinic will offer survivors a more comprehensive, therapeutic environment and a new home for the services of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). SART is a team of VSAC support workers, forensic nurse examiners and police/RCMP who work collaboratively to ensure that recent survivors of sexual assault receive immediate support, information, medical care and, if the survivor chooses, options for reporting.

Through Lorinda's extensive involvement with the SART team as a support worker and trainer, she has met with hundreds of survivors at the hospital and police station. While supporting survivors through that process, she has heard survivors express many wishes "I wish there weren't so many people around. I feel so exposed" "I wish I did not have to wait so long."

Fall Newsletter 2015

"I wish I could just have a shower right now." "I wish everyone understood how hard this is for me."

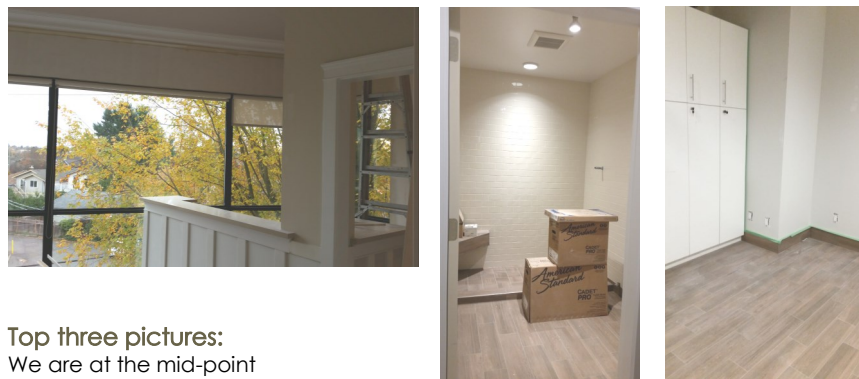
Whether it is offering a more confidential and inviting space without having to wait, being greeted with compassion and respect from anyone the survivor chooses to involve or having the option to shower in private bathroom with heated floors and towels, the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic was created as a direct response from the feedback we receive from survivors. This clinic will continually work to reduce barriers to ensure that all survivors can receive the care and services they deserve after experiencing a sexual assault.

Through our counselling services, prevention programs, community partnerships, Trans inclusion work, and the new clinic, the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre is committed to providing services that are accessible, innovative and honour the voices of survivors and our community. This commitment is what motivates and inspires Lorinda, along with everyone else at VSAC, to continue the work we do.



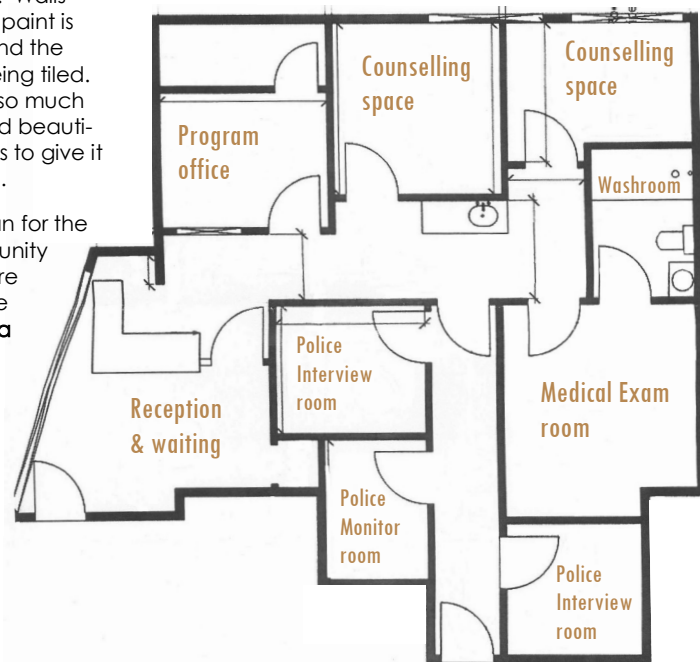
#201-3060 CEDAR HILL RD. VICTORIA, BC, V8T 3J5 ♦ BUSINESS LINE: 250-383-5545
CRISIS & INFO LINE: 250-383-3232 ♦ VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.VSAC.CA
CHARITABLE BUSINESS NUMBER: #10822 0054 RR0001

Look What We Can Build Together!



Top three pictures: We are at the mid-point of construction. Walls have gone up, paint is being put on and the washroom is being tiled. The space has so much natural light and beautiful, little touches to give it a "homey" feel.

Right: Floor plan for the Victoria Community Response Centre which will house our new **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic**.



Construction is underway!

When construction for the **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic** started at the end of September, it was the defining moment when we realized our wish, and as Lorinda articulated, a wish for survivors, became a reality.

The Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic will be housed in the Victoria Community Response Centre which is located in the same building as the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (3060 Cedar Hill Rd). The Victoria Community Response Centre will also house the Victoria Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Centre's Child Advocacy Centre.

The Victoria Community Response Centre will have a fully equipped medical exam room for survivors to receive medical and/or forensic care. The exam room will have heated floors and its own private washroom with a shower. The Centre will also house police interview rooms with state of the art audio-visual recording equipment and spacious counselling rooms.

D. Forbes Contracting Ltd. has taken on the job of doing the necessary renovations to create a warm and welcoming environment that will house both of these valuable programs.

We are incredibly appreciative with the amount of care, thoughtfulness and hard work Darryl Forbes and crew have put into building our new Centre.

We are excited for renovations to be complete and have the **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic open in February of 2016**.

Leave Your Imprint

The support from donors is crucial to sustain the vital services for survivors of sexual assault at the new **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic**. This is your chance to support a greatly needed service in Victoria and become part of something that is the first of its kind in British Columbia.

There are a number of ways in which we honor the generosity of those who give to the **Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic**. Donors in the categories listed below are given the following recognition to show the deep appreciation we have for your support.

Become a Champion of the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic

If you donate \$1000 or more to the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, we will add your name to our Donor Recognition Plaque that will be displayed at the Clinic. You will also receive a special invitation to the grand opening of the facility in early 2016.



Become a Guardian of the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic

Individuals or businesses who donate \$10,000 or more to the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic will be named a guardian of the clinic. To acknowledge the gifts of these supporters permanently, we will create an individual Donor Recognition Plaque to be displayed at the clinic. These donors will also have a special acknowledgement on our website and newsletter as well as receive a special invitation to the grand opening of the facility in early 2016.

If you would like to speak with someone about making a donation or schedule a visit to see the facility, you can call 250-383-5545 and ask to speak with someone on our Resource Development team. You can also send in your donation using the enclosed pledge card.

Please Accept Our Gratitude

When someone donates to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) they not only help to make a difference in the lives of survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, they also make a difference for the staff that work at VSAC. In countless ways, we, as staff, are lucky to work here and see firsthand the courageous ways in which survivors resist and heal from trauma. As staff, we get to create innovative programs to work alongside youth and see them strengthen their voices to speak out against sexualized violence.

Even though we are witness to so much resiliency and strength, at times this work can be hard and we need a reminder of hope. As a donor, you do that for us. We wanted to share our gratitude, so we asked the VSAC team the following question, **"There have been thousands of people who support the work of the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre, what does that mean to you?"**

Tracey, counsellor

"It's a relief. It means I can focus on my clients. It means this place [VSAC] exists; the heat is on, the lights are on – all that is being taken care of because of our donors. As a counsellor, when I am working with survivors, I carry the knowledge that there are thousands of individuals who create a community of support that holds us up. Donors create safety and stability for this organization and those are hallmarks for healing."

Paula, counsellor

"Knowing that there are donors who support Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC) makes me feel that I am not isolated in doing this work. There is a whole community that is supporting the clients I work with. It helps to create an atmosphere of hope; hope that things can get better. That feeling of generosity and goodwill is ultimately healing. For our clients to know there are people who donate to VSAC, it can help to restore their faith in the world that hurt them."

Lorinda, counsellor

"It shows that the help survivors receive is valued. The amount doesn't matter; I am moved that there is a community of people

who consider these services important enough to sacrifice something for it. Individuals can speak up through their dollars. When someone donates, what they are really saying is that sexualized violence is wrong and survivors deserve support."

Chaw-win-is, Prevention Manager

"When we can lean of the support of donors, we can lean on the support of hope; hope that there is a community that believes in the work being done here. That belief keeps me motivated because it shows there is a desire for change and I am not alone."

Karen, Crisis Line Coordinator

"It blows me away. As the crisis line coordinator, my position would not exist without the support of donors. It always amazes me the number of people that become part of the Centre when they commit to donating. Thank you."

Alexa, Trans Inclusion Coordinator

"I feel loved! Donors make me feel so fantastic and supported. When facing society-wide, systemic problems, knowing that there is a community of people who have our backs and support an organization like this – it is a big deal and a huge part of what gets me up in the morning."



Pictured: Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Staff

Gifts of Time

The volunteers at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre are truly incredible.

Through their on work the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), as office volunteers, on our Board of Directors, and at events, VSAC volunteers provide countless hours of their time, energy and kindness to ensure that survivors of sexual-



ized violence are supported in our community.

This year we said goodbye to one of our longstanding volunteers, **Heidi Exner**. Heidi first started at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre as a Prevention Coordinator with Project Respect in the early 2000's. She moved agencies to start working at AIDS Vancouver Island, but wanted to remain part of VSAC, so she decided to become a volunteer on the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). We usually ask SART volunteers to commit to a year of providing immediate, on-call support and information to recent survivors of sexual assault, but Heidi stayed on for five. From there, Heidi

decided to join the Board and we were more than happy to accept her into that role.

Heidi is someone that you want in your corner. She was someone who we could call on, when we needed it the most, even if it was last minute. Among her many talents, Heidi is an incredibly skilled public speaker and facilitator. If ever there was an event that needed an emcee, or a conversation that needed to happen, Heidi could be trusted to be there and perfectly articulate what we wanted to say and what we needed to hear.

These are just a couple of examples of what Heidi brought to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. Her level of commitment, passion, sense of collaboration, insight and positivity were true gifts to the Centre. Heidi always called herself, "a lifer" at the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre and although she is no longer with us in an official capacity, she will always be a strong supporter of VSAC. She has left a lasting impact on the work this agency has been able to accomplish.

Without the support of volunteers, VSAC would not be able to accomplish half of what it does. As an agency, we are incredibly grateful for everything that Heidi and all of our volunteers contribute.