To find out more, please visit the “In The News” page on our website: https://www.vsac.ca/in-the-news/

**40 YEARS OF MOVEMENT**

“In a basement with a phone in 1982, VSAC began our incredible history of supporting survivors and educating our community to end sexualized violence. And through decades of commitment through donations, volunteer hours, and staff dedication day after day and year after year, VSAC has remained responsive to community needs and pathways to healing.

- Elijah Zimmerman, Executive Director

VSAC is celebrating 40 years of serving the communities that live and reside in the traditional territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ, Songhees, and Esquimalt peoples.

A lot can change in 40 years. And for VSAC, a lot has changed. One of the incredible features of this organization is that we have continuously tried to move with the ebb and flow of society. We have tried to be responsive even if that still takes time. And there is a responsive quality to VSAC that stands out compared to other organizations in similar sectors.

Originally founded to provide services to survivors of sexual violence, VSAC is also at the forefront of trying to make systemic changes and has been a leader, locally, provincially and federally, providing resources, creating spaces, and advocating for change.

From a name change, adding to and reforming services, and moving physical spaces, VSAC has continued to listen, learn and evolve in order to support survivors, the support networks of survivors and the community at large. It is important to recognize this history.

Our hope is to use our history to explain our transformations, eliminations of barriers, and how VSAC has cemented itself as a critical place in community connection, support and healing.

Please continue reading for highlights from our 40 years of service delivery.

**THE 29TH ANNUAL TRIATHLON OF COMPASSION**

The 29th annual Triathlon of Compassion, in support of VSAC, took place on June 26th at the Esquimalt Rec Centre. In total $23,402.22 was raised exceeding our goal of $20,000!

The racers and fundraisers are a true inspiration. We were moved by the support for our Centre and felt deep gratitude to be able to gather safely once again in support of survivors.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, participated, and donated. The event was organized by Human Powered Racing and sponsored by Frontrunners, Arbutus Physiotherapy, Trek Bicycle Store Victoria, Country Grocer, and Kersten Orthodontics!

The event was generously discounted by: 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, counseling, and empowerment.

Fall Newsletter 2022

**OUR MISSION**

Since VSAC’s inception we’ve provided vital crisis and healing services to over 100,000 survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse.

Through Project Respect, our prevention education program, we have reached tens of thousands of youth with innovative programming that supports them to become leaders in addressing the root causes of sexualized violence.
Victim Services fundraisers of all ages. June 2022 marked the event's 29th anniversary. Triathlon of Compassion and has become a community event with racers and the longest running fundraiser. The triathlon eventually became known as the Annual Triathlon. Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

1982 - The Status of Women Action Group sponsored a standing Committee with various women’s groups and individuals who wrote a proposal for a new Centre. This was to ensure continued availability of support services for women who have been sexually assaulted after the local agency called Rape Relief lost funding. Later that year, a Board of Directors was formed, and set about to establish a viable and effective independent society. Core funding was negotiated and secured from the BC ministry of the Attorney-General. By the end of that year, an office was established and three part-time staff and volunteers for crisis line work were recruited.

1983 - VSAC was successful in their application for a grant to publish the “lets talk about sexual assault” booklet for teens. Later that year it won the Solicitor General’s National Crime Prevention Award. They received more and more funding to create further resources which they shared with schools, the police department, and more.

1989 - VSAC was still in its early years when the École Polytech massacre occurred in Montreal, Canada. The devastating event added a massive amount of increased collective consciousness about what people were beginning to call “violence against women”.

1995 - Due to many factors including sufficient governmental support, VSAC underwent an enormous period of growth. The number of staff increased from 3 to 22 members.

1996 - In February 2016 we opened the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic: the first, and only, integrated sexual assault clinic in B.C. Developed with enthusiastic support from Island Health, RCMP/Police, and Crown the clinic provides recent survivors of sexual assault with medical and forensic exams, crisis support, preventative medications, police and crown interviews, counselling services, and other community service referrals in one location.

2004 - “Project Respect” won the Women’s Safety Award. VSAC created a separate victim services worker position. Our specialized Victim Service Program provides services connected to the criminal justice system, including: information, support and accompaniment in making police reports; information and orientation on the court process including assistance with Victim impact statements; court accompaniment; case status information; assistance with applications for the Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP).

2007 - A Partnership with the Native Friendship Centre to create the aboriginal youth health and prevention program was formed.

2008 - Trauma informed practice and support (TIPS) training was created and provided to over 10 agencies.

2010 - Victoria Foundation honored VWSAC with their leadership award.

From VWSAC to VSAC

1999 - The key VSAC prevention education program “Project Respect” was started. Project Respect brings together youth and adults to create awareness and dialogue about the causes of sexualized violence such as gender expectations and stereotypes, systems of power, and the ongoing colonization of the lands we live on. In 2004, “Project Respect” won the Women’s Safety Award.

2012 - Originally titled the Victoria Women’s Sexual Assault Clinic (VWSAC), VSAC underwent a name change in 2012 to the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. This name change was a part of the Centre’s process to becoming a Trans inclusive agency. In 2012, VSAC opened up its services to be accessible to all members of the Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse community. We are grateful to community members for providing their important feedback and an opportunity to change to better serve survivors.

Sexual Assault Integrated Clinic

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2019 - The Indigenous Community Response Network, k̓ʷən̓̓eř ᵇəl̓ ʔaʔəm, Pʔaatel was formed. The Network brings together Indigenous partners, local Nations, organizations, community and urban voices to develop and support community-led initiatives for survivors of gender-based violence in a culturally grounded way. Find out more about the Network at https://www.vwsac.ca/about.

2020 - VSAC was responsive to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence. We adapted by providing telephone and virtual support sessions, and kept our clinic open throughout the pandemic, not missing a day of service. Project Respect began a collaboration with the community group Girls and Femmes with Afro-Textured Hair called Black Youth Empowerment (BYE). BYE’s focus is to create culturally relevant consent based prevention education. In May 2022, the six youth members of BYE were honoured with an award from the African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island in “recognition for their outstanding contribution to our communities.”

2022 - Thank you to the community for being part of the movement and a crucial part of this journey with us. VSAC was honoured with the gold award for “Best Charity” in the Best of Victoria Awards 2022. Thank you to those that nominated and voted for us, recognizing the value of our work in healing, education, and prevention.