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DOOR SOCIETY



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WISH  
Drop-In Centre Society

January 17, 2017

To: The Province Editors

Via email: provletters@theprovince.com

**Re: “Bad Girls, Dirty Boys, Exploited Victims” (Jan 16, 2017)**

Our Metro Vancouver Sex Work Exiting and Transitioning Consortium was dismayed to see yesterday morning’s overly sensational and misleading headline about Transitions, our upcoming 5-year sex work transitioning, retiring, and exiting project.

Your choice to headline the newspaper with “Bad girls, dirty boys, exploited victims” perpetuates the victimization, targeting, stigmatizing, and even brutalization of sex workers – all the things our organizations exist to combat.

Despite a 40-minute interview with reporter Bethany Lindsay, where executive directors Angela Marie-MacDougall (Battered Women Support Services) and Mebrat Beyene (WISH Drop-In Centre Society) spoke at length about the damaging and dangerous impacts of stigma on sex work and sex workers, we were alarmed to see such an irresponsible and offensive headline.

We encourage the editorial team to issue a formal apology and, especially when dealing with marginalized populations, consider the impacts language choices may have on public discourse and perceptions.

Signed,

Kevin Barlow, Aboriginal Front Door Society

Mebrat Beyene, Executive Director, WISH Drop-in Centre Society

Laura Dilley, Executive Director, PACE Society

Angela Marie MacDougall, Executive Director, Battered Women’s Support Services

Matthew Taylor, HUSTLE Program Manager

Additional Correction: The project is funded by Public Safety Canada, with contributions from the City of Vancouver.