

WISH News

Spring 2013

WISH is Open Overnight!

On December 17th, 2012, Commissioner Wally Oppal presented his report on the Missing Women's Inquiry. He urged the Provincial Government to commit to providing "funding to existing centres that provide emergency service to women engaged in the sex trade to enable them to remain open 24 hours per day."

To that end, Attorney General Shirley Bond announced that the province would commit \$750,000 in annualized funding to open the WISH Drop-In Centre overnight. For the first time in its 28 year history, WISH has secure funding to expand its hours. As of March 2013, WISH is open from 6 p.m. to 11 a.m., seven days a week!

March 11, 2013 was the first night that the WISH Drop-In Centre opened overnight. We are thrilled to be able to offer more



hours of safety to women engaging in street-based sex work in the Downtown Eastside. The overnight hours are the most critical time for women who work in isolated areas and WISH is confident that they will benefit greatly from this expansion in service.

Overnight, WISH will be offering snacks and soup. There will be a healthy breakfast and a morning snack available every day as well. WISH also envisions a future expansion of its supported employment program to go with the expansion in frontline services.

We want to thank ALL the donors and supporters who have stood by WISH through the years. It is you who enabled us to improve the health and safety of women who are pushed to the margins for over 28 years. It is you who helped us create a welcoming, caring, non-judgmental space where women can feel at home.

Going forward, **we still need your help!** The fullness of programming and services we can offer women will continue to rely on the commitment and generosity of supporters like you.

We look forward to growing with you.



RUN (or WALK) for WISH! *In the 2013 Scotiabank Charity Challenge Half Marathon & 5K on June 23rd!*

Feel healthy and support WISH at the same time! You can help raise funds for WISH by registering to run (or walk) in the 2013 Scotiabank Charity Challenge. Whether you're a seasoned runner ready to take on a **half-marathon** or you want to **run/walk the 5K course**, this is a fun way to make a difference! The run takes place on **Sunday, June 23rd**. To register:

1. Go to **vancouverhalf.com** & sign up (all run details are available there)
2. Select WISH as your Charity
3. Create your personal fundraising page and start collecting pledges!

Want to run (or walk) with us? Join our team! Search us by our team name (Run4WISH) when you register! Or ask your company to sponsor a team of you and your colleagues!

Call Marina for more info at **604-669-9474** or email **wishfundraising@telus.net**.

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WISH 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

When: Thursday, June 27, 2013 - 6pm

Where: WISH Drop-In Centre (call 604-669-9474 for directions)

You must be a member of WISH to vote at the AGM.

Membership is free.

If you would like to become a member, or check if your membership is current, please call **604-669-9474** or email **wishadmin@telus.net** as soon as possible.



Spotlight on...The WISH Peer Safety Patrol

What springs to mind when you hear the words 'safety' and 'security'? Male guards? Intimidation? Physical force?

Well, those choices simply were not appropriate when WISH was looking for a **security solution** to its then brand new female-sex-worker-only drop-in facility in 2008. After much discussion and consultation with participants, the solution became clear: To make the centre truly 'safe', women from the community had to be the driving force behind any security strategy.

There was also an urgent need among WISH participants for **supportive employment opportunities and skills development training** with organizations that understand their needs.

The needs of the centre and the needs of the community combined and, in late 2008, the Peer Safety Patrol was 'born'.

Peer Safety Patrollers are WISH participants who are **trained and employed** by WISH to provide security services from a non-enforcement model. This means that their skill sets include **tactics to de-escalate violence and manage crises effectively as well as peer outreach, first aid, incident reporting and self-defense**. Their goal is to maintain safety and order around the WISH Drop-In Centre for the benefit of WISH participants, staff, volunteers and neighbours. **Aboriginal women, who represent over 50% of WISH participants, make up a majority of the Peer Safety Patrol staff.**

Peer Safety Patrollers undergo a comprehensive training program that includes sections on how to calm down potentially violent situations, perform minor first aid services and provide empathic and effective support to women living and working on the street. This training is delivered by WISH and community partners including the VPD Sex Industry Liaison, PACE, Vancouver Fire Department, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Battered Women's Support Services and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Once women have completed the training, they become **employees of WISH** and receive biweekly paycheques with deductions for CPP and EI. We can fondly recall a time when a new Peer Safety Patroller asked us to take a picture of her with her first paycheque from the program, which turned out to be her

very first one ever.

On any given day, Peer Safety Patrollers perform **safety sweeps** of the area around the centre, **greet women** coming into the building, **clear debris** from the area, **bandage up cuts**, hand out **condoms and other supplies**, **walk women home** from the centre and generally **lend a trained, experienced helping hand** to women on the streets.

The work is crucial to the neighbourhood and rewarding for women in the Peer Safety Patrol program. As one Peer Safety Patroller recently remarked:



"I'm so grateful for the WISH Safety Patrol Program!...I enjoy helping the women and giving them someone to look up to and to show them not to give up hope. I also take very seriously the danger involved in keeping women safe and protecting them from dangerous men when we are on the street doing our peer outreach...I love giving back to my neighbourhood (DTES)."

The contribution that WISH Peer Safety Patrollers make to the neighbourhood cannot be underestimated. Last year alone, Peer Safety Patrollers distributed 11,115 condoms, delivered first-aid related services 1139 times and offered peer outreach services 1142 times.

Often, Peer Safety Patrollers will use their training to intervene and de-escalate or divert potentially violent situations. One longtime Peer Safety Patroller recounted a situation when she was able to keep a woman who

was in danger safe:

"I was working alone and I met this girl who was being stalked. There was no bus coming. She was so scared. So I stayed with her until the bus came. I saw her after that at the Drop-In. She came up to me and told me she was grateful. She said she didn't know what would have happened if I wasn't there"

Women on the streets, who experience a great deal of discrimination and trauma, trust the Peer Safety Patrollers and feel comfortable asking them for help.

Peer Safety Patrollers also enjoy a great sense of camaraderie, with each other and with the women they help every night on the streets. In the words of another Peer Safety Patroller:

"We are all there for each other. That's the most important thing"

Thank-you Peer Safety Patrollers for the wonderful work you do!

In 2012/2013 Peer Safety Patrol was generously supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation, Greenshield Canada, the Women's Inter-Church Council, the Kairos Foundation, Greygates Foundation and the Canadian Western Bank Group.

*Thank-you for your support!
Thank-you for your generous support!*

RUN....or WALK for WISH

On Sunday, June 23rd, WISH will once again participate in the **Scotiabank Charity Challenge Half Marathon & 5K!** Last year, WISH started out with a humble goal of raising \$5000 and ended up raising \$15,000 from 30 runners and walkers!

This event is WISH's biggest fundraiser of the year and WE NEED YOU!

In 2013, our goal is to raise \$20,000! Will you join us? It's a fun, healthy way to make a difference in the lives of the wonderful women who come to WISH!

There are two ways to participate: You can run a **half-marathon** or you can run (or walk) a **5k**. The 5k course is wheelchair, stroller and dog friendly.

Once you choose your course, visit

www.vancouverhalf.com to register and select WISH as your charity. After you sign up, you can create your own personal



fundraising page, which you can customize, then email, facebook and tweet to your friends to get them to **sponsor you**.

The funds you raise will help WISH increase the health, safety and well-being of women in survival sex work in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Please call **Marina at 604-669-9474** or email **wishfundraising@telus.net** if you would

like more information. We can even send you some pamphlets about WISH to hand out as you collect pledges.

You may also wish to consider asking your employer to sponsor a team so that you and your colleagues can get in shape and raise funds for WISH together.

Looking forward to seeing you at the run!



Annual Women's Memorial March

On February 14th, 2013, WISH attended the Annual Women's Memorial March.

This event is held on Valentine's Day each year to honour the memory of women from the Downtown Eastside who have died due to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual violence. Now in its 22nd year, the march is a tradition dedicated to remembering murdered and missing women and dedicating ourselves to justice.

"This year, the Women's Memorial March occurred in the context of the provincial missing women's inquiry, which marginalized the voices and experiences of DTES residents, Indigenous communities, and women's groups. In December 2012, the international organization Human Rights Watch called on Canada to appoint a national commission of inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women." (Source: <http://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/>)

The march is led by Indigenous women, who experience epidemic levels of violence. Similar marches occur on February 14th in at least fifteen other cities. WISH is proud to serve on Vancouver's Annual Women's Memorial March committee.



WISH staff Mary & Emily at the 2013 Annual Women's Memorial March

Christmas at WISH

Christmas was warm and wonderful at WISH, thanks to the generosity of so many members of our community.

The **Vancouver Soroptimists and Rotary Women's Club** donated many beautiful gifts which were given to women at the WISH Christmas party, on Christmas Eve and through the MAP Van. In addition, many other friends from our community took the time to drop-off clothing, shoes, toiletries and presents for women who come the Drop-In Centre.

Phi Beta Pi Alumnae came to the Drop-In Centre with cards, envelopes and stamps for women who wished to



send them to their families.

The Drop-In Centre was very festive and beautifully decorated by WISH participants. Our community of women, staff, volunteers, donors and supporters came together to make this occasion special. **We thank each and every**



Phi Beta Pi Alumnae

one of you who helped!

Words We LOVE

Women's Wishes

The women in WISH are special to me
I hope it will help you understand where we've been

Some are tired, and haven't ate much
Despite our hard cover, we have a soft touch

Most of us feel that WISH is our home
When we're not out working, we won't be alone

Try not to judge, what most may not know
We're all beautiful women, our heads to our toes

We form a strong bond, when nobody else
Asks how we're doing, and if we're in good health

In closing, I'll say, we women have pride
Don't judge by the covers, rather beauty inside

- J.C. (WISH Participant)



Donor Spotlight:

West Vancouver United Church Women

For 12 years, the Women's Group of the West Vancouver United Church has been raising funds for WISH through their flea markets. They have also donated lots of clothing, toiletries and other much-needed items to WISH over the years! We appreciate their hard work, loyalty and generosity and look forward to another 12 years of working together. The West Vancouver United Church Women's next flea market happens in May. Check their calendar for dates and times: <http://wvuc.bc.ca/all-events>

Would your community group, school or place of worship like to put on a fundraiser for WISH? If so please call Marina at 604-669-9474. WISH would be happy to support and help promote your efforts.

To donate to WISH, feel free to mail cheques to the address below, all 604-669-9474 or **give online** at <http://bit.ly/f0MK8F>.

Thank-you for your support!

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MAP VAN

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wish-vancouver.net

facebook.com/WishDropIn

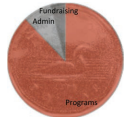
@WISHWellness



Connect with WISH

WISH...The Little Charity that DOES!

For the second year in a row, WISH has been chosen as a Top Pick by Charity Intelligence Canada. WISH received this great honour in recognition of its transparency, accountability and impact on the community. Read the full report here: <http://bit.ly/153ECva>



Button Blanket in progress by WISH Aboriginal Program Participant

Thank-you for all your ongoing kindness and support!
WISH is a registered charity #87047 5563 RR0001