

WISH
Drop-In Centre Society

WISH NEWS

FALL 2015

Improving the health, safety and well-being of women in the street-based sex trade.

In This Issue...

Welcome Mebrat Beyene - P.1

Button Blanket Group -P.1

Donor Spotlight: The MAC AIDS Fund—P. 2

Wecome Meghan Cross! - P.2

Farewell Emily Groundwater —P.2

WISH Events Committee Update—P.3

Women Learn Computer Skills at VPL! - P.3

Holiday Angels Needed - P.3

WISH Contact Info—P.4

Monthly Giving —P.4

t. 604-669-9474

f. 604-669-9479

wishdropincentre@shaw.ca

wish-vancouver.net

Welcome Mebrat Beyene—New Executive Director of WISH

If you haven't yet heard, longtime WISH Executive Director Kate Gibson retired this past summer, leaving us with big shoes to fill.

WISH knew that replacing Kate would not be easy: After all, for 12 years she worked tirelessly to build the organization into the powerhouse it is today. She gave so much of her expertise, wisdom, love and energy to WISH, for which we will be forever thankful.

WISH is pleased to report that, after a long search, we finally found an Executive Director to continue to lead our organization!

Mebrat Beyene comes to WISH with a long history of non-profit management and leadership. She



WISH Executive Director Mebrat Beyene

was the Executive Director of PeerNet BC for 4 years and before that she worked as a Programs Officer at Status of Women Canada and as an independent consultant and project manager.

A mother and community volunteer, Mebrat has given back over the years by serving on various boards and committees. And as if

all that doesn't keep her busy enough, she also a professional singer and performs with her a capella quartet, What It Is! and with the City Soul Choir.

We are thrilled to welcome Mebrat to the WISH team!

If you would like to connect with Mebrat please feel free! She can be reached at wishdropincentre@shaw.ca or at **604-669-9474**.

United Way campaigns are underway in many workplaces.

Please consider giving to WISH if your workplace runs a United Way Campaign. We need your support!



WISH Button Blanket Group Show at Gallery Gachet

A new program at WISH—the WISH Button Blanket Group—is making an impact in the community!

Once a week, a group of 6-8 Aboriginal women from WISH meet to learn traditional Northwest Coast button blanket making.

The group was started by WISH Program Assistant Dimicia Speck who saw a need for more culturally-relevant activities for indigenous women in our community.



She took the initiative to create the group, which she co-facilitates with WISH Program Assistant, Nicole Smith.

We are thrilled to announce that the work of the WISH Button Group will be exhibited at the

Gallery Gachet Salon Shop from November 6th—December 15th. Address is 88 E. Cordova.

Please follow WISH Drop-In Centre Society on Facebook and @WISHWellness on Twitter for updates.

Congratulations to WISH Button Group participants, Dimicia and Nicole. We are very proud of you all! Thank-you for creating this opportunity to connect urban Aboriginal women to culture.

Donor Spotlight: the MAC AIDS FUND

The mission of the MAC AIDS Fund is to serve people of “All Ages, All Sexes, All Races” affected by HIV/AIDS.

It is the charitable foundation of MAC Cosmetics and is supported by worldwide sales of VIVA Glam Lipstick and Lip-glass.

MAC Cosmetics has been a leader in the makeup industry for decades, and the bold, visionary work of the MAC AIDS Fund echoes the reputation of its parent company. Globally, the MAC AIDS Fund partners

with innovative organizations that directly help the most stigmatized persons with HIV/AIDS.

Every year since 2008, the MAC AIDS Fund has generously supported WISH with a grant of \$30,000. Historically, this outstanding gift has been designated to the WISH Drop-In Centre.

Most recently, it helped WISH purchase a new Mobile Access Project (MAP) Van to provide overnight street outreach to



Our new MAP Van!

women working in the DTES and in areas that have few to no overnight services.

We would like to take a moment to acknowledge our deepest thanks to the MAC AIDS Fund!

Visit

www.macaidsfund.org

to learn more about the MAC AIDS Fund’s incredible work!

Welcome Meghan Cross



WISH Administrative Coordinator Meghan Cross

WISH would like to welcome Meghan Cross to our team! Meghan joins us this October as our new Administrative Coordinator, replacing Emily Groundwater, who will be dearly missed.

A free spirit, Meghan was lured to the west coast from

Saskatchewan for a new adventure and to pursue her Masters degree in Urban Studies. She has a background in finance, program coordination and project management.

Outside of work and school, Meghan enjoys live music,

yoga, ultimate frisbee and surfing. She was most recently Project Coordinator at the Provincial Health Services Authority, where she worked on the redevelopment project of the BC Children’s Hospital.

Welcome to WISH, Meghan!

Thanks for all your service to WISH, Emily!



Farewell, Emily Groundwater

As WISH welcomes Meghan to our team, we would also like to say farewell to our outgoing Administrative Coordinator, Emily Groundwater.

Emily joined WISH in 2013 and recently left to pursue a job with AESHA: A community-based research project that examines sex workers’ access to health

care services. WISH is one of AESHA’s community partners so we hope that we will still see Emily from time to time.

Thank-you Emily for your excellent service to WISH! You will be missed by us all.

We wish you the best on the next step of your journey!

Interested in Volunteering at WISH?

Please email wishvolunteers@shaw.ca to find out the date of our next volunteer orientation!

WISH Events Committee Update

The Events Committee at WISH is comprised of women who use the WISH Drop-In Centre, and facilitated by WISH Programs Coordinator, Eva Botten.

The committee does a stellar job of organizing fun social activities for WISH participants.

So far this year, they have organized a trip to the planetarium, a pool party at New Brighton Pool, a picnic at Crab Park and the annual WISH BBQ in Crab Park!



WISH staff Anne & Eva at the WISH BBQ

Also, this past summer, they provided the Downtown East-side community with a 'Bingo in the Park' day, at which they served over 400 meals and played 15 rounds of bingo! Peer Safety

Patrol staff and WISH Executive Director Mebrat also pitched in to make this event a success!

The committee's Outdoor Movie Night

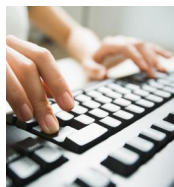
series was also a big hit: They even provided popcorn and rootbeer floats!

The most recent event held by the WISH Events Committee was a Trivia Night at the drop-in centre, which saw a record-breaking 40 women competing in teams of 10. This epic battle saw teams battling it out on topics ranging from 'name that time' to top 10 lists, Big Bang trivia, brain-teasing riddles and more. However, in the end, everyone won.

"...it was exciting to see them gain the skills to get online, and to see their enthusiasm to continue building these skills and exploring online resources. I would be happy to see the women back at VPL as individuals or as a group, and I hope that they continue to build online skills that will empower them in their daily lives.

- Michelle Patenaude, VPL Librarian

Women Learn Computer Skills at VPL



Participants in the Peer Safety Patrol (PSP) program at WISH are learning computer literacy skills at the Vancouver Public Library (VPL)!

The PSP is a supported-employment initiative at WISH that trains and employs women to provide security for the drop-in centre. Computer literacy is so key to employability that Program Coordinator Eva Botten reached out to VPL to see if

there was any opportunity to collaborate. Fortunately, VPL Librarian Michelle Patenaude was happy to help! She says:

"VPL and WISH have maintained a solid relationship for years as both organizations share the desire to create safe spaces and learning opportunities. Digital literacy and access to information is also of great importance to VPL, so when WISH asked me to arrange a class on computer basics for participants of WISH's drop-in centre, I was happy to accommodate. In our short

session with the women from WISH, it was exciting to see them gain the skills to get online, and to see their enthusiasm to continue building these skills and exploring online resources. I would be happy to see the women back at VPL as individuals or as a group, and I hope that they continue to build online skills that will empower them in their daily lives.

WISH is excited to see where this collaboration will end up. Thanks, VPL for all you do to make knowledge accessible!

Holiday Angels Needed

The holidays will be here before we know it, so we'd like to ask our supporters if they can help us continue our tradition of seasonal gift giving.

Community service groups such as Vancouver Soroptimists and the Rotary Women's club have, over the years, provided WISH with lovely holiday gifts for our participants

through their fundraising activities.

Families, schools and individuals also hold drives for toiletries, makeup, nail polish, hats, scarves, chocolate, candy, jewelry and other treats that we can put into gift bags. A gift drive in your apartment building can be very successful. Just put up a notice and coordinate donation drop-offs!

WISH deeply appreciates these community efforts to make the holidays bright for our participants. If you can help, please call Marina at **604-669-9474** or email wishfundraising@shaw.ca

Thank-you for your support!

www.wish-vancouver.net



CONTACT WISH

334 Alexander Street

Vancouver, BC

Phone: 604-669-9474

Fax: 604-669-9479

E-mail: wishdropincentre@shaw.ca

www.wish-vancouver.net



WISH Drop-In Centre Society



@WISHWellness

Improving the health, safety & well-being of women in Vancouver’s street-based sex trade.

Since 1984, WISH has been an essential point of contact for self-identified women who are involved in Vancouver’s street-based survival sex trade.

Wherever a woman is at on her life’s journey, she is welcome at WISH.

To donate to WISH, please visit:

www.wish-vancouver.net

Or call 604-669-9474.

Cheques payable to WISH Drop-In Centre Society can also be dropped off or mailed.

Thank-you!

Donate Monthly

Monthly Giving: An Easy Way to Help

Monthly donors are a very special group of WISH supporters.

Their donations are automatically deducted off a credit card.

Donating \$5, \$10 or more each month is often easier than making an annual lump sum gift. Plus, it makes a big impact. You can cancel or change the amount of your monthly donation at any time.

To Donate Monthly to WISH:

1. Go to our website www.wish-vancouver.net
2. Click on the ‘**donate now**’ button and choose the ‘**donate monthly**’ option on our Canada Helps page. Enter your information.

Alternatively, you can simply fill out the enclosed donation form and return it to us by mail.

You will receive a consolidated tax receipt for your monthly gifts at the end of each calendar year.

If you have any questions about signing up as a monthly donor, please give us a call at **604-669-9474** or email wishfundraising@shaw.ca

Thank-you!

“Thank-you from a grateful client...Many women have better days because of your contribution to this center, me being one of them. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank-you for being you. I get to come to a place where I am accepted for me.”

- WISH Participant, in a card to a donor