

35 YEARS

WISH

Drop-In Centre Society



NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2019

YOU MAKE WISH HAPPEN

With your donations to WISH, YOU are helping some of Vancouver's most vulnerable women - women who work in the street-based sex trade. Vancouver has been named one of Canada's most liveable cities, yet for many of the women in the Vancouver Downtown Eastside, that's not the case. 90 percent of the women who rely on WISH live with mental health or substance use issues. 80 percent are homeless. More than half are Indigenous. All live in poverty.

Your donations make an incredible impact on the lives of the 300 or more women who rely on WISH every day. You provide 300 to 350 women with hot, nutritious meals, plus snacks, every day. You give women a choice of programs to help them realize the goals that they've set for themselves - whether that's creating a resume for the first time, participating in a music therapy session, or working in one of our peer-supportive employment programs - giving them opportunities to make safe, healthy and positive choices.

The warmer spring weather brings an increase in women coming to the Drop-In Centre and MAP Van, as well as an increase in women seeking our services for the first time.

Your donations have helped over 100 new participants take advantage of our programs and services in the first four months of 2019 alone.

26 women are now working in our in-house Peer Volunteer and Peer Safety Patrol Programs. In addition to providing an alternate income stream, these programs give women mainstream work experience, structure and responsibility, giving them an increased sense of confidence and self-worth. Your support also made it possible to hire a part-time program assistant in the Aboriginal Health and Safety Program, allowing more Indigenous women to benefit from WISH.

Whether you choose to support WISH through financial donations, clothing, or your time - YOU make WISH happen, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your thoughtful generosity.

Sincerely,

Mebrat Beyene, Executive Director



FIVE REASONS TO RUN FOR WISH IN THE SCOTIABANK CHARITY CHALLENGE.



1

Your donations go directly to programs and services that support approximately a thousand women, every year, who engage in street-based sex work.

2

You are partners in fueling self-determination and empowerment in women whose lives have often been defined by homelessness, stigma, poverty and violence.

3

WISH has 35 years of experience, vision and leadership in delivering programs to the most vulnerable women in our region.

4

When you invest in WISH, you are investing in positive change—in the lives of women, and in the broader community.

5

We can't do this work without your support.

Together we can improve the well-being of female identifying sex workers and give them access to opportunities to make free, healthy and positive choices.

WALK OR RUN FOR WISH

WISH is once again putting together a team of passionate supporters to walk or run 5K or a half marathon and raise money to support the women who rely on WISH, and we want YOU to join our team.

The Scotiabank Charity Challenge on June 23, 2019, is our largest fundraising event. 100% of funds raised go directly to frontline support for the women who depend on WISH. By joining Team WISH, you'll be joining a like-minded group of people who are passionate about improving the health, safety, and well-being of women involved in Vancouver's street-based sex trade. You don't have to be an athlete to participate. In fact, almost half our team has never run before, and most of us plan to walk the 5K distance.

Even if you've never fundraised before – we will support you every step of the way. Fundraising is all about relationships, and reaching out to your network is easier than you think. You'll get fundraising tips and sample emails so you can share your fundraising goal with your friends and family.

Everyone who registers gets an official Scotiabank run t-shirt, and once you cross the finish line, a beautiful race medal, a fabulous after-party in the park, and the satisfaction of knowing YOU made an impact on someone's life.



PS: We'll even give you a special code to get a discount on your race entry. Just call us at the office or email development@wishdropincentre.org.



YAY

HOORAY!

..... our

NEW SITE

IS LIVE!

right this way

NEW WEBSITE – SAME WEB ADDRESS

With a fresh look and feel, our new website is designed with you in mind; easier to read and navigate, and highlights the impact of your donations on the women who rely on WISH every day. Check it out and let us know what you think!

www.wish-vancouver.net

A LITTLE LIGHTNESS IN THE DARKNESS MAP VAN CELEBRATES 15TH BIRTHDAY

In and out of recovery for 20 years, Tracy recalls working on the street in the pouring rain. *"Homeless, lonely, hungry, tired, and soaking wet."* She remembers listening for the MAP Van, describing it as a little lightness in the darkness. *"They were so kind and loving, offering a cup of coffee and something to eat. Never judging and always helpful."* This was the kind of job she wanted to do someday.



5 years clean and sober, Tracy now has a place of her own, and works on the MAP Van. She says, *"Now I'm the one telling them 'you can do this'"*. Tracy loves the one-to-one contact with the women, including some she used to work with. Tracy laughs *"I'm there to support them, but they are so supportive of me! I feel useful, and I like giving back."*

Thanks to your donations, women in Vancouver's street-based sex trade have a place during the night to warm up, grab a snack, and get harm reduction supplies. What started as an idea 15 years ago to bring services directly to the women working on the streets, the Mobile Access Project, or MAP, has evolved into a welcome sight, and a critical lifeline for women working on the streets.

"As someone who accessed this van for many years, I can say what an honour and pleasure it is to finally be clean and sober, and working on the MAP Van. Huge Love n Respect...xo"

~ TRACY, FORMER PARTICIPANT

Today, the MAP Van is a mobile safe space operating across Vancouver 7 days a week from 11pm-5am. Every month, 800 women rely on the van for coffee and juice, harm reduction supplies, referrals and support, bad date reporting, and a friendly smile.

HAVE YOU MADE SOMEONE SMILE TODAY?

Just like you, many of our participants like learning new skills, improving their self-confidence, and giving back. For women who haven't held a mainstream job for years, homelessness, lack of confidence, and stigma mean that prospects are limited and barriers are high. This is why the Supportive Employment program is so important.

Years ago, Shelly* found herself working on the street, where she came to rely on the loving, non-judgemental support she got at WISH. Last year, through our Peer Volunteer Program, she started volunteering at WISH. Shelly recently entered our Supportive Employment Program, and is now working shifts in the Drop-In Centre.



"I love giving back. You can make someone's day just by listening and talking to them."

When asked about her long-term goals, Shelly smiled. *"I want to work full time in the Drop-In Centre. A lot of people treat them differently, but I know what it's like for the women who come here. There is no judgment at WISH."*

Your donations will help more women like Shelly develop the skills and experience they need to reach their goals, and begin building the lives THEY want. *not her real name

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK:

- \$25** lunch for 10 - 12 women in the Aboriginal Health & Safety Program
- \$50** pays for one woman to complete a Supportive Employment shift
- \$75** provides a woman with bus tickets so she can travel to and from an internship for three months
- \$150** provides more than 200 women with a nutritious, hot breakfast or dinner
- \$500** supports 30 - 40 women during an overnight shift on the MAP Van



SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2019,
2PM TO 4PM

The WISH Up-Close Matinee Mixer is an intimate fundraising event and your opportunity to tour the WISH Drop-In Centre and WISH MAP Van, learn about our capacity-building programs and meet the leadership team.

And... we are very close to being able to share some exciting, ground-breaking news with you!

The event is free and will be open for registration this summer – watch for your email invitation.

HOPE TO SEE YOU ON SEPTEMBER 21ST!



THE GREAT GET DOWN

An enthusiastic crowd of 400 got down on May 4th at The Great Get Down, raising more than \$12,000 for the women of WISH. Dawn Pemberton, Canada's leading Queen of Soul, and a long-time friend of WISH, organized this birthday dance party and fundraiser for WISH to celebrate her 40th birthday.

The Great Get Down was an amazing celebration of music, community, and connection, featuring music by Soulstream and DJ Slade. Tremendous thanks to Dawn for her generosity in putting this together, and to everyone who came, bought raffle tickets, and made donations.



DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A FUNDRAISING EVENT?

Organizing a fundraiser to support WISH is a very personal and meaningful way to help some of Vancouver's most vulnerable women. It also introduces WISH to a community of people who might not know about us. Supporters have hosted every kind of fundraiser, large and small, from dinner events, to drop-in yoga and karaoke nights! We can provide you with promotional materials, and can even help you set up an online fundraising page.



For more information about organizing a fundraising event for WISH, please call us at the office or email development@wishdropincentre.org.

