

**WISH**  
Drop-In Centre Society



**NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2018**

## CHOICE LEADS TO CHANGE

Imagine not having the comforts of a safe, warm home and loving family this holiday season. That's the reality many of WISH's participants face.

Right now there are approximately 1,200 street-based sex workers in Vancouver who face daily challenges with things like food, shelter and hygiene – not to mention their safety and mental well-being. These women have few opportunities to meaningfully change their circumstances, and face many barriers when trying to do so. The vision of WISH is that every woman should have access to opportunities to make free, healthy and positive CHOICES – and YOU can help make that a reality.

You're already aware that WISH has been offering the comfort and safety of the drop-in centre and the MAP Van for many years. But did you realize we also create other opportunities for learning and growth? Programs in mainstream employment, music therapy, and Indigenous culture, health and safety? Did you know we recently hired our first-ever "in-reach worker" to support women, one-on-one, with developing and pursuing longer term goals? We are working hard to break down barriers and give women healthy CHOICES.

The previous year was extremely difficult, with overcoming funding shortfalls and program cutbacks, but WISH is now poised to move – right alongside our participants - from surviving to thriving! With your support, we intend to introduce more new and responsive programming in 2019, and work more closely with women on achieving personal growth and positive mental health. We are proud to say in the coming year we will move from rapid response to basic needs, into capacity-building and changing lives for good. Together we can offer local street-based sex workers more support and CHOICES than ever before!

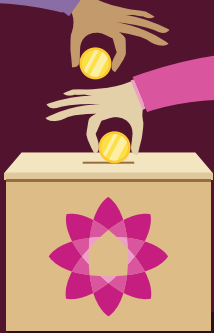
Please consider giving the gift of positive options and opportunities to women who don't often have them. YOU make a CHOICE to give, so women can make the CHOICE to grow.

Happy holidays to you and your loved ones!

Mebrat Beyene, Executive Director



# DOUBLE YOUR GIVING POWER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



## DOUBLE YOUR GIVING POWER

From December 1 – January 31  
all donations of \$250 and up will  
be matched by a generous,  
anonymous donor.

Long-time WISH supporter, Pat\*, is determined to make a difference for street-based sex workers this winter. So from Dec 1 - Jan 31, she is going to match all donations over \$250. This means YOUR gift can do **TWICE AS MUCH GOOD!**

Pat first became involved with WISH over 20 years ago, when a friend introduced her to the organization. Back then, WISH was in its infancy, and struggling to provide support with very limited funding and staff. Fast forward to 2018, and Pat is thrilled to see the growth and progress that WISH has made, providing critical support to so many local women. She is struck by the incredible warmth and humanity every time she visits the Drop-In Centre – a space she is very grateful for, as she remembers how hard things were before it existed. Still, she notes, the need continues to grow, and securing funding is increasingly challenging. That's why Pat gives so generously, and wants to use her gift to encourage others to give. She recognizes the impact of working together to provide choices for people who are doing their best with circumstances life has given them. WISH is so very grateful to Pat for her continuous support and encouragement. Will YOU join Pat in creating greater change?

\* Not her real name. Donor's name has been changed to respect her privacy.

## WITH MATCHING DONATIONS YOUR GIFT WILL ENABLE POSITIVE CHOICES LIKE:

**\$25** Special holiday meal, dessert, and gift for four women at WISH's holiday dinner

**\$50** One woman can complete a Supportive Employment shift, providing her with stable and safe revenue

**\$125** 10 Indigenous women can attend one week of Aboriginal Health & Safety Programming

250

Covers the costs for a field trip to a local attraction for up to 10 women

500

Allows the MAP Van to support 30-40 women with harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention, referrals, donations, and snacks – right where they work each night

750

Provides one full month of customized and innovative literacy opportunities through the Learning Centre to approximately 50-70 women

1000

Provides up to 10 women with 10 music therapy sessions in the Drop-in Centre

2500

Covers the cost of fuel for one full year for the MAP Van to be on the road, providing critical front-line supports 365 nights a year

## A DONOR PERSPECTIVE

When Doug B. made two significant cash donations to WISH in 2018, he provided this thoughtful note to explain:

*"Why give to WISH? Because someday I hope society will realize that a) women are equal and cannot be put in subservient, dependent, or repressive roles - so that they have the same economic and life opportunities as men and b) sex workers are just that: workers. They're either there by choice or not. If the former, then legalize their work and protect them. If the latter, then give them every opportunity to change their lives. Thanks again for the work that you do."*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Each and every Monday, long-time WISH volunteer, Bonnie, brings joy to the WISH community through her Birthday Bag program. Bonnie collects fun and useful items all year round through her own personal network, and then puts together Birthday Bags for anyone who is celebrating in that particular month. The program has been going on for over a

decade, and staff say it has become something the women look forward to and talk about all year. Volunteer Coordinator, Sandra Chung, marvels at how a small gesture can mean so much to women not used to such kindnesses. Bonnie says she is just grateful to be able to give back in some small way, and that she gets as much out of it as the birthday women do. She recognizes that these are people who are no different than herself, and their stories of adversity and resilience really touch her heart.

If you have a unique idea for giving back or making someone's day brighter, we'd love to hear from you! Or if you'd like to support Bonnie's program, the following items are always in demand:

- Compass cards/ Long distance cards / Stamps
- Grocery or drug store gift certificates
- Hats and socks
- Umbrellas
- Make-up and accessories
- Hygiene products
- Candy

Do you have a skill or special knowledge that you would like to share? WISH is always looking for volunteers to co-lead activities or learning sessions on diverse topics. If you'd like to volunteer your time, please get in touch! Our participants love doing crafts, yoga, dancing, and learning about Indigenous and other cultures. We also hope to start a Book Club next year!

## SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The dream continues for our first ever Supportive Employment Program's mainstream employment alumnus, Melody\*. With over a year of mainstream employment now under her belt, she continues to love her work with East Vanity Parlour; and business owner, Kristi Johanson, says she is still learning and growing every day. Even after all this time, Melody says she still wakes up every morning and can't believe this is actually her life. By all accounts, this has been a very positive experience for both employee and employer, and WISH has many more women ready for an opportunity to make a significant change in their working lives.



Do you own a business that hires entry level/basic skills workers? We need YOU to help make this program a success. Program funding covers wages through the internship period, so you have nothing to lose and so much to gain. Contact Eva at [supportiveemployment@wishdropincentre.org](mailto:supportiveemployment@wishdropincentre.org) or 604-669-9474 to discuss any openings you have, currently, or coming up.

WISH also appreciates one-time opportunities for multiple workers. For example, WISH recently partnered with a festival organizer who offered participants a day of wages to help with clean-up of the event site. We're also happy to report deeper team engagement, increased responsibilities for, and the highest-ever number of, Peer Safety Patrollers employed in the WISH Drop-In.

Offering alternative and additional choices for earning money is essential to providing street-based sex workers with options to make free, healthy and positive choices. Reach out today for more information.

*\* Not her real name. Participant's name has been changed to respect her privacy.*



Women In Trades volunteering at WISH Drop-In



Volunteers at Christmas Dinner

WISH cannot happen without YOU!

🌸 THANK YOU 🌸

#imakeWISHhappen



City Councillor Pete Fry, WISH Chair Jenn McGinn, City Councillor Michael Wiebe, Park Board Commissioner Stuart Mackinnon



Team lululemon running for WISH

## THE POWER OF MUSIC



As programming continues to expand at WISH, we're pleased to offer more music therapy options. This means more one-on-one sessions, and profound results. At a recent WISH Karaoke Night, one participant was so inspired by the positive feedback from her peers that she gathered up her nerve to sing in a local venue! That boost in confidence was inspiring to see, and

Music Therapist Christina is gratified to be part of this evolution. "Music is a gateway for participants to express their true needs, and I can then refer them to additional supports or help them engage with potentially compatible peers". As more funding becomes available, Christina sees an increase in participation, particularly from the LGBTQ2+ community. Her hopes for 2019 include song-writing workshops and more Karaoke Nights.

A gift from you can make these transformational music programs possible. (And in appreciation, you'll be our guest at one of WISH's upcoming Community Karaoke fundraising events!)

35 YEARS

IN 2019, WE WILL  
CELEBRATE  
**35 YEARS**  
OF WISH!

Stay tuned for all kinds of  
exciting plans and events...

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updates through our website  
or by emailing us at  
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