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Community Development

Between April and October, CCWS Regional Coordinators travelled to 100 Mile House, Abbotsford, Cranbrook, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Prince George, Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria and Williams Lake and provided telephone and email support to 40 communities across BC.

Community visits were instrumental in, among other things:

- developing a strategic plan for coordination in the East Kootenays,
- identifying a mission statement and strategic foundation for the 100 Mile House Violence in Relationships Committee,
- laying the groundwork for a community response to sexual assault in Vernon and Kitimat,
- exploring issues related to police and community responses to violence in the Interior and north-central Okanagan.

As 2009 draws near, our Regional Coordinators will be mapping out their travel plans for the coming year. If you need help developing or improving cross-sector coordination in your community, please contact Michelle (250-862-2887) or Gail (250-397-2389).

Dual Arrest

A preliminary survey of EVA members in November 2007 found that 55 of 64 respondents (86%) are aware of women in their community who have been arrested by police in relationship violence cases. In October 2008, we distributed a follow-up survey to gather police file numbers and case specifics. The results will provide the RCMP with the information it needs to locate and examine internal case records.

Gail Edinger and Gisela Ruebsaat of CCWS presented on the issue of women being arrested to the RCMP E Division Management Committee (DMC). CCWS will be reviewing existing RCMP

training materials on the Primary Aggressor Policy and is exploring the possibility of delivering joint training with the RCMP and Criminal Justice Branch.

RCMP E Division distributed a bulletin to all District Officers requesting that they remind each of their detachment personnel that "dual arrests in VIR investigations must only be conducted as a last resort and only when the facts support this extreme measure". On December 15, EVA staff met with E-Division to bring forward 18 cases where women victims had been arrested. E-Division has committed to following up on these cases and we will be meeting with them to follow up and strategize at the end of January.

We also served as a key informant in a report commissioned by the Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division regarding women being arrested in domestic violence situations and collection of related statistics. The results of the research are under review by the Police Services Division of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) and will inform future training and policy development.

Third Party Reporting

Third party reporting gives women who are reluctant to engage the justice system a way to provide information about a sexual offence anonymously to police. The recently launched CCWS initiative is the first comprehensive third party reporting project in Canada and will serve as a model for other jurisdictions.

In May and June, 144 workers from police and community-based and police-based victim assistance programs (CBVAP, PBVAP) attended third party reporting training sessions in Prince George, Cranbrook, Nanaimo, Kelowna, Abbotsford and Vancouver. The training surpassed our highest expectations and we have already received enquiries about future sessions.

A series of six third party reporting information sheets for CBVAPs, PBVAPs, STV Outreach and Counselling programs, sexual assault nurse examiners and transitions house are available on our website (www.endingviolence.org/publications).

Keeping Women Safe Report

Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence was released in April 2008. The report, which had "in principle" endorsement by the Vancouver City Police, BC Municipal Chiefs of Police and RCMP, was the result of a partnership between CCWS and the Victoria Women's Transition House.

The *Keeping Women Safe* report was picked up by a number of major media outlets and was a hot topic of debate in the provincial legislature. Leading researchers on violence against women and a member of the Canadian Observatory on Violence Against Women have come forward in support of our recommendations.

The MPSSG responded by creating a Deputy Ministers' committee on violence against women to develop a province-wide strategy on violence against women using the report as its guiding framework. In addition, a link to the report has been added to the National Judicial Institute's bench book, which is used by judges to determine court outcomes.

CCWS and EVA met with Deputy Solicitor General David Morhart to identify next steps for implementing the report's recommendations. He has agreed to consult with us further regarding the province's strategic direction on violence against women.

Lee Inquest

In April 2008, a Coroner's Inquest was held to investigate the Park-Lee murder-suicide in Oak Bay, BC in September 2007. Building on interest by the Coroner's Office in our *Keeping Women Safe* report, we collaborated with lawyer Diane Turner to apply for standing in the inquest. Our application was accepted, making EVA the first provincial victim-serving organization to ever participate in an inquest in BC.

During the inquest proceedings, we introduced our *Keeping Women Safe* report as evidence and

called EVA's Executive Director, Tracy Porteous, and Ontario psychologist Lori Haskell as witnesses.

Hearings were suspended on May 7, pending a final legal decision on whether Crown prosecutors involved in the case will be required to testify. The case is currently with the BC Court of Appeal.

2008 Training Forum

On November 20-21, 330 people from across BC gathered for our annual training forum. The conference, entitled **Creating Stronger Safety nets: Ending Violence Through Risk Assessment and Safety Planning**, included six expert keynotes and 15 workshops on a broad range of topics related to the physical and emotional safety of clients and workers in the anti-violence sector.

CCWS was involved in organizing the event and members of our team co-presented workshops on:

- A Coordinated Response to Protection Orders Enforcement
- Coordinated Interventions When Women Use Violence
- Collaboration for Victim Protection: Women's Services, Community Corrections and Offender Program Interventions
- Working With Women at High Risk for Sexual Assault

The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive and we're already looking ahead to next year!

Recent Publications

- Dual Arrest Backgrounder (January 2008)
- Keeping Women Safe: Eight Critical Components of an Effective Justice Response to Domestic Violence (April 2008)
- Third party reporting info sheets (June-September 2008)

All CCWS and EVA publications are available for download free of charge at www.endingviolence.org/publications.

Mark Your Calendars

February 24-26: Community Leadership Training

Visit our online Calendar of Events (www.endingviolence.org/event) for the latest news on our training opportunities!

New Faces in the Working Group

The CCWS Working Group welcomed the following new members at our September 23 meeting:

- Ruth Alfred, Pacific Association of First Nations Women
- Shabna Ali, Executive Director, BC Yukon Society of Transition Houses
- Pat Kelln, Pacific DisAbled Women's Network (Pacific DAWN)
- Elise Wickson, Director, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
- Superintendent Rob Rothwell, Vancouver Police Department

New Faces Around the Office

Earlier this year, **Alison Timmons** left the organization to pursue her Master's in Social Work at UBC and **Sarah Leavitt** took on an exciting new role as Communications Officer with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. We wish them both all the best in their new endeavors!

CCWS welcomes **Stephanie Bennett** (Administrative Assistant) and **Sheena Starky** (Communications Coordinator). Stephanie majored in Sociology at UBC and has a keen interest in the development and empowerment of marginalized communities. Sheena studied economics and politics and has communications experience in the public and private sectors.

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