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CCWS STAFF CHANGE

We are sad to say that Laura-Ashley Wright, our Administrative Assistant since September 2006, resigned from her position this month in order to be able to devote her energy to her full-time university program. Fortunately we were able to make a quick and smooth transition to our new Administrative Assistant, Alison Timmons, who has been working at the BCASVACP office since last October as a temporary worker. Alison has already dived into her new job, bringing a strong background in feminist issues and excellent administrative skills.

MORE PROGRESS ON REFERRALS

As we reported in our last bulletin, CCWS has been working with the RCMP and Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division, MPSSG, to improve referrals between CBVAPs and PBVAPs. VSCPD has just released a bulletin specifically directing municipal police, RCMP and PBVAPs to refer all victims of power-based crimes to CBVAPs (victims of violence in relationships, sexual assault, criminal harassment, child abuse, adult survivors of child abuse and child witnesses of violence in relationships). The bulletin also directs all detachment commanders to meet with their local PBVAPs and CBVAPs to ensure that referral protocols are in place and policy is being followed. The bulletin was sent to all RCMP detachments, municipal police departments, PBVAPs, CBVAPs, the BCASVACP, Police Victim Services of BC, RCMP "E" Division and the Assistant Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Justice Branch, MPSSG. This is a key step in improving women's safety in BC. A similar bulletin will come from "E" Division soon.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: TRAINING AND SUPPORT

CCWS works with communities all over the province, almost all of them small, rural and isolated. We support communities who are interested in—or involved in—violence against women coordination (i.e. bringing together various sectors—police, community counselling, health, Crown, etc—to address violence against women).

Recent work with communities includes:

- Assisting anti-violence workers in a number of communities to improve relationships with local RCMP detachments. Workers were able to address concerns on a local level and did not need to use the Safety Issues Protocol (developed between CCWS and RCMP) to take concerns further.
- Providing consultation and resources to assist Gabriola Citizens for a Healthy Community to respond to the needs of survivors of violence in relationships and sexual assault on Gabriola Island.
- Assisting Salmon Arm to research potential specialized responses to violence against women.
- Workshops for coordination initiatives in Prince George, Vanderhoof, Invermere, Castlegar, Nelson and Creston—topics included coordination basics, coordination revitalization, strategic planning, and the myth of "mutual battering."

WORKSHOPS

Recent workshops presented by CCWS include The Myth of "Mutual Battering" for Oceanside RCMP Detachment (Parksville and Qualicum), On Finding Common Ground for the annual Ending Relationship Abuse Conference, and Safety Planning and Risk Assessment for the Legal Services Society Provincial Conference.

COLLABORATION WITH PACIFIC DAWN

CCWS is planning, in collaboration with Pacific Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), a cross-regional intersectoral discussion group on the needs of women with disabilities who are survivors of violence. Information from this group will guide future CCWS policy and action in this area. CCWS is also supporting DAWN with the preparation of a grant proposal. Monika Chappell of DAWN is a member of the CCWS Working Group; we are excited to be moving forward in our work together.

BCASVACP ANNUAL TRAINING FORUM 2006

"Emerging Spirit: From Violence to Social Justice through Faith and Culture," was held in Vancouver in November. CCWS coordinated three workshops: The Journey Within: Using Spirituality As A Vehicle for Change; Strengthening Community Coordination with Christian Faith Communities to Increase Safety; and Collaboration: A Bridge Between Faith Communities and Secular Anti-Violence Services. Evaluations of the Forum have been overwhelmingly positive. About 15

members of coordination initiatives across BC attended the Forum; we hope to increase this number in 2007!

PROJECTS TO ADDRESS PROVINCE WIDE ISSUES

- **Third Party Reports:** CCWS continues the development of a provincial protocol to allow sexual assault victims who do not wish to report to police to submit a third party report to another agency. Our task group with members from RCMP, municipal police, government and Aboriginal communities has developed a template interview questionnaire and made a presentation to the BC Association of Chiefs of Police.
- **Information Sharing:** With the assistance of Working Group members representing police/RCMP and MPSSG, CCWS has completed a backgrounder on information sharing between police and victim services. MPSSG and CCWS are also working in partnership to develop a provincial information sharing strategy to ensure that women who are at risk of domestic violence receive critical information about the accused's past violence.
- **Release of UTAs:** CCWS worked with the RCMP to ensure that RCMP VIR policy was changed to allow UTA's to be released to support workers with the signed consent of the victim. A memo has gone out to all detachments.
- **Sponsorship Debt Collection:** CCWS joined voices with immigrant and women serving organizations to raise concerns about the province's role in sponsorship debt collection. We and many others requested that the province consider not collecting on the debt or providing an exemption in cases where an abused woman is the sponsor. MCS has recently announced that for women who can establish "substantial evidence of abuse" the province will delay collection of the debt. CCWS is now working with government and the community to advocate for a complete exemption of the debt and to ensure that the requirement to show "substantial evidence of abuse" does not put too heavy a burden on women.
- **Communication with AG:** CCWS and the BCASVACP wrote a letter to Attorney General Wally Oppal putting forward a number of proposals to increase women's safety in BC. The AG has requested a follow up meeting with us.

SPECIALIZED RESPONSE TO VAWIR

The BCASVACP and the CCWS Program are working with the Victoria Violence Against Women Coordination Committee and MPSSG on a project to identify critical

components of an effective specialized response to violence in relationships

PREMIER'S CONGRESS ON WOMEN'S SAFETY

CCWS is working with the BCASVACP, BC Institute Against Family Violence and the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses to prepare comprehensive briefing materials for presentation at the Premier's Congress on Women's Safety, which will take place later this spring.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Our Community Leadership Training for those involved or interested in coordination is going ahead in March with a record 25 participants! We are thrilled with the response (70 applications!) to this fourth offering of the training.

NEW DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Check out the CCWS page on www.endingviolence.org to download our latest documents:

- ***Immigrant, Refugee and Non-Status Women and Violence in Relationships:*** explores some of the issues facing immigrant and refugee women, as well as women without immigration status, who experience violence. Please note that we have also created a diagram to accompany the document and facilitate discussion.
- ***Can a Woman Get Information from Police about Her Abuser's Criminal Past?:*** primarily for victim service workers to help them understand privacy rules which apply to release of information about an abuser's criminal record. This will help with the safety planning process.
- ***Naming the Violence: The Gendered Aspect of Violence Against Women:*** One of the challenges that coordination initiatives often deal with is how to define the violence that they are working against. This document looks at the resistance to gender-specific language and offers background materials and discussion points for coordination initiatives that are dealing with this issue.

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Go to www.endingviolence.org and click on
Community Coordination for Women's Safety