



# Annual Report 2012/2013

## REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP: ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In reflecting on the past year, it seems there has been continued uncertainty in the sector with the provincial election, new Family Law Act and amendments to the Child, Family and Community Services Act. Even through uncertainty, BCSTH members continue to provide excellent services and supports with limited resources. Ongoing education and education specific to significant legislative changes have been at the forefront for many members and BCSTH continues to support that learning.

As a centre for excellence, BCSTH endeavours to support members with a variety of learning opportunities, which include online and in-person training. Recognizing the limited training dollars available, BCSTH has been working conscientiously to expand online education to provide more learning opportunities for members. CWWA and VIP training and webinars were new additions to the BCSTH Community (online training platform) this year. Foundations in Violence Against Women, also available on the BCSTH Community, continues to reach more members, providing a strong base understanding of the VAW sector. The Reducing Barriers in-person and online trainings were offered to Transition Houses again this year, giving an opportunity to look at how to serve women who are experiencing the intersection of violence, substance use, and mental wellness. The training has gained exposure nationally, with interest from Transition Houses across the country. A platform change for the online community has made training development and implementation easier, which will help increase what we are able to provide in future. In addition, the Annual Training forum continues to grow and provide outstanding educational and networking opportunities.

BCSTH continues to work on exciting projects to expand the continuum of services in the Violence Against Women sector. The Blueprint project, which explored post transition house supports, wrapped up in 2012 and provided insight and recommendations. This year two new projects are launching: a project in partnership with the FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and BC Non-Profit Housing Association to develop promising practices for supporting women in Transition Houses who are immigrants or refugees, and an Aboriginal Consultation project to address recommendations specific to Transition House programs in the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. The goal of the Aboriginal

Consultation project is to develop a flexible model of service that supports women and their children accessing Transition Housing programs in First Nations/Aboriginal communities.

The Board of Directors continues to work hard both internally and externally. We have been reviewing, streamlining and creating the policies, strategies and goals set out for the society and staff team to help the society run more effectively and help us achieve the BCSTH mission. Externally, we continue to work with BCSTH staff to ensure that Violence Against Women is considered in policy development, funding decisions and governmental priorities both provincially and nationally.

In a climate of uncertainty, it is the work of BCSTH members that continues to inspire progress towards our common goal to end Violence Against Women, children and youth. I am truly proud of the work that is done by BCSTH and the member organizations in providing supports and changing to meet the needs of the women, children and youth we serve.

**Michele Walker**, *Chair of the Board*



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Members,

I would like to begin by saying a big THANK YOU to all of our members for continuing to support women experiencing violence and their children in the face of consistently restricted budgets and an ever-changing policy landscape. I would also like to thank the staff and Board of BCSTH for their hard work and commitment to end violence against women and their children. There were several changes impacting the sector this year, including the development of the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence and community consultations to develop an action plan on domestic violence for the Province of BC. We have also seen the implementation of the new Family Law Act of BC and amendments to the Child, Family and Community Services Act. In addition to advocating around and responding to these changes, BCSTH took on some large and challenging projects and wrapped up a number of others this past year.

With the guidance of Rhiannon Wong and Cynthia Fraser, BCSTH continues to be the leader on technology safety for women and children in Canada, offering 7 Technology Training to Enhance Women's Safety workshops in BC and across Canada in 2012/13. Rhiannon worked with Kim Bayer to create and modify training to support Aboriginal children in on-reserve transition houses across BC as well. We also received funding from BC Housing to develop a framework on how to better serve Aboriginal Women and their children in transition houses across BC. This project will start in August 2013 and last one year.

Other trainings offered in 2012/13 included Reducing Barriers, which was facilitated in-person in

6 communities across BC by Laurie Parsons. We also delivered various fee-for-service trainings throughout BC and developed and delivered facilitated as well as self-paced on-line trainings on a variety of topics. BCSTH will continue to develop and expand our training options with a commitment to delivering both in-person and online trainings.

Through our involvement on the Roundtable of Social Services, BCSTH participated in provincial campaigns to raise awareness about the role of Social Services in BC. This group published close to ten opinion editorials in various papers across BC focused on topics such as violence against women and children, poverty, housing, elder abuse, substance use and mental health. The collective strategy is to raise awareness about the work our sector does in supporting the lives of the most vulnerable people across BC.

Nationally, in the fall of 2012, BCSTH participated in the first conference of Canadian Women's Shelter's and Transition Houses, held in Montreal. We delivered workshops based on our Technology Safety and Reducing Barriers trainings and led discussions on developing federal violence against women legislation. Through the leadership of Laurie Parsons, we continue to participate on the Board of Directors of this national organization.

As I look forward to 2013/14 fiscal year, it is clear that the challenging environment will continue for our sector. I want to express my sincere and deep appreciation to our members for your continued support to end violence against women, youth and children.

**Shabna Ali**, *Executive Director*

## WOMEN'S SERVICES

We do not need to tell you how difficult it is to juggle priorities when there is more to do than time and resources with which to do it. No one knows better than you how challenging this is. The implications of social and legal policy changes such as the new Family Law Act, changes to MSD service delivery and policy and the Child Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA) required considerable attention in 2012/13. Our focus on these issues and in our work - the privilege of supporting you in yours - is guided by the belief that women who experience violence are not the problem to be solved; rather, it is the social beliefs and conditions that allow for violence against women and keep women in violent relationships that need to change.

In addition to our advocacy work, the Women's Services program offered a number of training opportunities in 2012-2013. Thanks to BC Housing's ongoing support, we were able to develop, modify, pilot and facilitate various trainings, including:

- 6 three-day Reducing Barriers agency-wide trainings for member agencies
- a four-week facilitated online Introduction to Transition House Work (Part I)
- modifications to our online Foundations in Violence Against Women Training

Thanks to support from the BC Law Foundation, we partnered with PIVOT Legal Society to provide a series of webinars for anti-violence advocates on various topics. Legal Webinars will be available through the BCSTH Community site ([www.bcsthcommunity.ca](http://www.bcsthcommunity.ca)) for those unable to participate in the live webinars. For more information about BCSTH trainings, visit our website [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)

## BLUEPRINT PROJECT: POST TRANSITION HOUSE SUPPORTS

In 2012/13, BCSTH wrapped up a two-year project, funded by Status of Women Canada, that examined how best to support women as they were leaving transition houses. The project, led by Kim Bayer, focused on long-term housing, but was designed to enable Transition Housing program to provide various supports and referrals to meet women's needs. The goals of the were to:

- recognize the varied needs women may have as they move on from Transition Housing programs

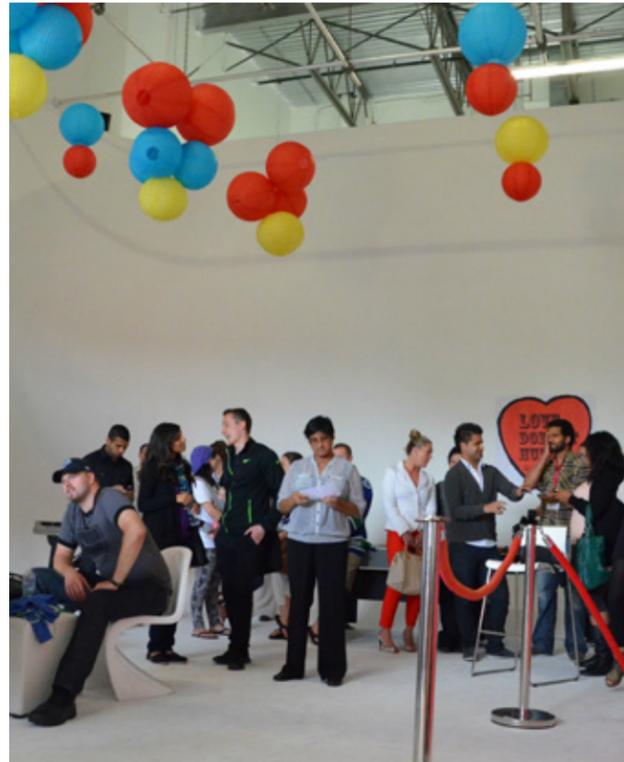


Photo Courtesy of Lisa Bayer

- and assist women in meeting those needs (e.g., housing, building a sense of community, legal support, support for child care issues, and support around mental wellness or substance use)
- recognize that for many women these varied supports are overlapping and dependent on each other (e.g., a woman may need to access Income Assistance in order to obtain market housing)
- build on the positive relationships and supports women have as they move on from Transition Housing programs and counter the isolation that often comes with experiences of violence
- foster community networks that strategize and act to make women's access to housing and supports after leaving a Transition Housing program easier

The Post Transition House model was implemented and evaluated in two communities in BC. Most women who participated in the Post Transition House Support programs felt supported and empowered; however systemic barriers continue to be a significant issue in women's lives. The assistance of a dedicated post-transition house workers helped to reduce some of these barriers, but the reality of limited low-cost housing is a barrier that persists. We hope to secure funds to pilot in both larger and smaller communities to determine wider applicability in the coming year. The final external evaluation can be found on our website [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Bayer

## CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

2012/13 marked an innovative year for Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA) programs incorporating the use of technology and media into almost all aspects of provincial activities. We moved from conference calls to webinars providing opportunities for CWWA programs across the province to connect and share unique activities developed for children and youth exposed to violence against women in local communities.

With a contribution from the Ministry of Justice, BCSTH developed two online training modules, Introduction to Working with Children and Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence and Supporting Children and Youth Exposed to Violence Against Women. Both trainings launched spring 2013. These online courses were supplemented by two two-day in-person training sessions facilitated by Tracy Myers.

In addition to training, CWWA programs participated in two online surveys about technology misuse and outcome measurement. Finally, with the support of our membership and in partnership with popchips, BCSTH produced the Love Doesn't Hurt Public Service Announcement featuring Ryan Kesler of the Vancouver Canucks. This PSA reinforces the intent and key

messages of the CWWA program such as:

- Violence Against Women is Not Okay
- Abuse is not your fault
- There are people available to help

2012 also marked the 20th anniversary of the Children Who Witness Abuse Program! We'd like to acknowledge the contribution to our work by CWWA program staff over the past two decades from coordinators, counsellors, volunteers and practicum students. Without each worker taking the time to complete surveys, participate in advisories and conference calls, and attend/facilitate training, webinars and workshops, we would not have been able support CWWA workers to do the life changing work they do. CWWA workers have made the past 20 years memorable and continue to encourage and inspire us to work to collectively prevent and end violence against women and girls. Join us on October 23rd, 2013 at the Annual Training Forum to celebrate CWWA programs!

For information about CWWA programs and activities, please visit our website at [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)

## TRAINING

### Online Training (BCSTH Online Community)

In 2012/13 we proudly welcomed more than 500 people to our new online training community! The following courses were available in 2012/13:

- Foundations in Violence Against Women, which was re-edited and replaced by a more efficient 2nd Edition
- Introduction to Transition House Work Part 1
- CWWA I: Introduction to Working with Children and Youth Exposed to Domestic Violence
- CWWA II: Supporting Children and Youth Exposed to Violence Against Women
- Violence is Preventable Training
- Reducing Barriers Online Training (available for participants of in-person Reducing Barriers training)

### In-Person Trainings

In the past year, we offered and executed the following in-person trainings:

- Technology Training to Enhance Women's Safety, conducted in BC and across Canada
- Reducing Barriers training, conducted in BC and across Canada
- CWWA 2-day in-person training, conducted twice in March
- VIP training, conducted in October, immediately prior to the Annual Training Forum in Richmond, BC

### Annual Training Forum

Our Annual Training Forum (ATF) took place October 17-19, 2012 in Richmond, BC. More than 200 people attended the event, which offered more than 30 workshops and 2 keynote presentations. At the forum, we celebrated the launch of our new PSA featuring Ryan Kessler.

Some of our most popular speakers at the 2012 ATF included Cynthia Fraser, Fiona Kelly, Tracy Myers and Safeteen. From our follow-up surveys, we heard from you that the best workshops had practical information and resources to take back to your workplace. We encourage you to participate in the membership survey to help us ensure we are offering the most beneficial workshops we can at the next Annual Training Forum.

We look forward to another wonderful roster of speakers and topics to choose from for the October 2013 event.

### Shelter Net Training

In 2011 BCSTH and BC Women's Hospital Woman's Abuse Response Program (WARP) were awarded the contract from BC Housing to develop and deliver training to homeless shelters on keeping women safe. To develop the training curriculum, BCSTH and WARP recruited and worked with an advisory committee of homeless shelters from across the province. We undertook focus group research with people with lived experiences who were staying in, or who had stayed in, shelters in BC. It was clear from these discussions that women's safety in shelters was at risk.

With the support of the advisory committee and two shelter workers who co-facilitated, our two organizations provided training in seven communities across BC. The curriculum was reworked as the trainings proceeded to incorporate feedback we received. Overall the training was well received and many agencies made plans to implement changes. The curriculum is now the property of BC Housing and there are no plans at this time to deliver the training again.

## 24 HOUR CENSUS

On November 27th, 2012, 136 programs participated in BC Society of Transition Houses' 4th annual 24 Hour Census of Violence Against Women's services in BC. The Census provides an unduplicated count of how many women, youth and children were helped, and how many more were unable to get help, during just one day in Children Who Witness Abuse (CWWA), Transition House, Safe Home, Second and Third Stage programs in BC. BCSTH released a full report on the 2012 24 hour census in May 2013. Highlights included:

- 864 women, youth and children received compassionate care and shelter in Transition House, Safe Home, Second Stage and Third Stage programs
- 345 children, youth and women, were helped in CWWA programs
- 1449 calls, emails and texts were responded to by Transition Housing and CWWA programs
- 772 people were educated about violence against women and the impacts on women, children and communities
- 661 people, mostly women, youth and children, did not get the help they needed

For more about the 2012 24 Hour Census see the BCSTH website [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Bayer (L) & Hannah Lee (R)

## LIBRARY REPORT

The BCSTH Library has an online database with over 1,200 web links, books, reports, DVDs, and other resources that are carefully curated to support BCSTH staff and members in their work with women and children. In 2012/13, we added over 200 new items to the database (the library catalogue).

Our members use the catalogue to link to key web resources, borrow 263 print and audio-visual resources and contribute reviews of resources they have used and found helpful. Topics of particular interest to members in 2012/13 were: trauma, restorative justice, BC family law, trafficking, bullying, dating violence, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, girls, men's response to violence, feminism, grief, Aboriginal services, safety planning, statistics, Power & Control wheel adaptations, counseling, prevention, substance use and mental health.

In addition to access to the Library database, members in 2012/13 received:

- Monthly Library eUpdate via the BCSTH eNews
- BCSTH Library weekly blog postings about resources
- Book giveaway at BCSTH conference (recycling older materials)
- Research assistance

The library is staffed for 7 hours per week. For more information about the library or to search our online database of resources see the BCSTH website [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)

## CAMPAIGNS

In April 2012, BCSTH was one of the 15 charities in North America chosen as a recipient of their Game Changers program. Through the program, pro athletes working with PopChips select a charity to volunteer with. Ryan Kesler of Vancouver Canucks chose BCSTH as his choice charity and participated in a "Love Doesn't Hurt" Public Service Announcement that was launched in November 2012.

In addition to the launch of the PSA, BCSTH developed 5 different "Love" postcard series, reusable bags and lanyards designed by Hannah Lee which are available for purchase on the BCSTH website. The money raised from this campaign will support the development of a violence prevention campaign. This year BCSTH also recreated the safety tip card as a resource for women fleeing violence. For more information visit the resource section of our website [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)

## DONATIONS

This year BCSTH was fortunate to receive various donations on behalf of BCSTH members. Some of the notable donations members received this year are:

- Stock Craft: 168 cribs, 90 dress tables and bunk beds
- A52 Warehouse: \$20,000 worth of brand new women and children's apparel
- Vancouver Canucks Sports and Entertainment: 83 Canucks tickets and 100 Carrie Underwood concert tickets



BC Society of  
Transition Houses

Suite 325, 119 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5  
Tel: 604.669.6943 | Toll Free: 1.800.661.1040 | Fax: 604.682.6962 | [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)

