

South Peace

Community

Resources Society

is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to meeting the social, educational, and personal needs of the community by providing services that develop skills for living.

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SPCRS NEWSLETTER

October - December 2005

December 6th

March & Memorial Service

Tuesday night, December 6, was a cold and icy night in Dawson Creek. We debated whether to walk from NAR Park or drive our vehicles behind the RCMP escort truck. We turned on our battery-powered candles, and decided to march in the cold, to remember the 14 women gunned down at Ecole Polytechnic in Montreal in 1989. We remembered other women: the mothers, sisters, daughters, friends who have been killed because of human brutality. We walked quietly, breathing in the cold air, breathing for those who no longer can, carrying small lights of remembrance, and silently shouting: "We have had enough!"

We met with a larger crowd at the United Church: men, women and children. Reverend Marilyn Carol led a service of remembrance and hope. She read: "We recall the tragedy that took place on this same day in 1989: fourteen women whose future came to a terrible halt. We give thanks to their mothers and families who have bravely kept up their action against violence, often reliving their suffering in the public eye. We wish them peace." We lit 14 candles:

1. A candle for the mothers who are victims of violence but have tried to keep their children safe from the effects so that the children could grow to be healthy, happy and peaceful in their relationships.
2. A candle for the sisters who have suffered at the hands of their partners, the sisters who try to help and the sisterhood of women who care for and support one another.
3. A candle for the grandmothers who lived in a time when women had few rights but who taught their daughters and grand daughters to stand tall and be anything they wanted to be.
4. A candle for the daughters who have watched helplessly while their mothers were beaten or raped or financially abused and who were determined to create a better life for themselves.
5. A candle for the friends who put themselves in harms way to support their friends and get them to safety and healing.
6. A candle for female politicians, female firefighters, female police officers, female emergency medical personnel, female doctors, female nurses, female transition house workers and other professions who help women who have experienced violence.



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December 6th

March & Memorial Service

Continued from page 1

7. A candle of thankfulness for the women who dedicate their lives to helping in small ways, in large ways, to individual women or groups of women, who lobby for better laws and better standards for women and children.
8. A candle of peace for the women and children who suffer the most in disasters or war, who struggle for food, clean water, clothes, work, education and freedom.
9. A candle of strength for the women who are disabled as a result of their abuse or who have been abused because of their disability.
10. A candle of safe shelter for the women and children who have been sexually exploited, forced into the sex trade, sold and traded as commodities, exposed to disease and killed by their customers.
11. A candle of freedom for the women who are politically oppressed who are not able to work, to practice their religion, to choose their life partner, to go to school or to have or not have children.
12. A candle of appreciation for the men who wear white ribbons and proudly stand against violence against women.
13. A candle of protection for all women who are currently living in violent homes.
14. A candle of celebration for all the women who have escaped violence and are now living happy, free lives where they can offer the community the full range of their talents and gifts.

We sang hymns together, prayed together, and chose pieces of fabric that we pinned to a cloth to form a quilt. Each piece was too small and frayed to be of much use, but together, would form a beautiful warm blanket of hope, as people can do for each other. We remembered the isolation that comes with violence, and the courage that comes with togetherness. Two young women sang songs of hope: "Amazing Grace" in Cree, and "Love Can Build a Bridge". Candles in clear glass holders, wrapped in purple netting, were given to everyone to take home. The message tied to them said:

"This candle is the light that has burned in women through the ages, Women who have suffered through violence, wars, poverty, famine or persecution and who have survived, raised children, cared for others, helped sick and elderly, remained strong in their convictions and acted as a beacon of hope for all women all over the world. Let this candle remind you to be a beacon of hope to those around you."

Refreshments were served upstairs in the church hall and provided by the Community Awareness Committee of SPCRS.

*Submitted by
Maureen Cristall, CWWA Counsellor*



Announcing a NEW PROGRAM at SPCRS!



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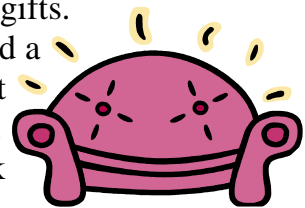
The **Dawson Creek Outreach Program** began in January to assist women where gaps in service currently exist. The program, located at the administration building, is part of the Family Safety, Counselling & Support Services Department and is coordinated by Lurind Jeaneaux.

For more information, please call Lurind at 782-9174

MY Residence

MY has been keeping busy doing her volunteer work. Everyone who knows MY, knows that Christmas is her favourite time of year, and she enjoys helping the staff decorate her tree and going for drives to look at the Christmas lights around town. MY had a wonderful Christmas at her mom's and received many terrific gifts.

Also, she was able to attend a Christmas party at Sudeten Hall and had a great time. MY's program purchased a new couch and loveseat during the holiday season, which were much needed and appreciated by all. New patio doors were also installed at the residence and look wonderful and are much more energy efficient.

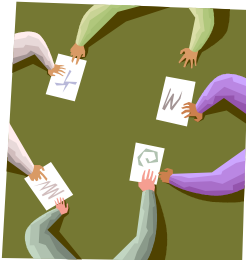


Jaydee Cornish resigned from SPCRS and will be sadly missed. On a lighter note, we welcome Keltie Jabbs to our staff team and congratulations to Susan Sipe on her new position at MY Residence!

We look forward to a New Year of pleasant surprises, happiness and nice weather.

Management News

The Management of SPCRS is concerned about rates of pay and how they effect recruitment and retention of employees. We have made a clear plea to the Select Standing Committee on Finance as well as discussions with Blair Lekstrom and CSSEA representatives. As you know our employers association, Community Social Services Employers Association and our union, BCGEU have begun bargaining. Both sides understand that pay for people in this field needs to be improved, particularly for starting wage, and that wage increments need to be improved so that raises occur more frequently. CSSEA and BCGEU will be attempting to get as much as possible from negotiations but are constrained by the governments funding of increases. Don't let the negotiating games discourage you. Both sides have years of experience in negotiating and, like poker, they never give away what is actually in their hand. I believe there will be improvements that satisfy employees and make it easier for employers to recruit and retain qualified staff. There is also an incentive to ratifying the new collective agreement by March 31st. Both employees and employers will receive a 5% signing bonus if we can reach a ratified agreement by that deadline. That incentive should encourage all of us to reach an agreement.



Managers have been busy recently submitting proposals for several grants in the area of women's services and child care services. The Canadian Women's Foundation has grants available to support our non-funded Violence Against Women in Relationship Committee. This grant will be used to breathe new life into our Tracking sub-committee that reviews the services women have received after an assault, what is working well and what areas need improvement. We have provided a proposal for BC Community Action for Women's Safety for funding to do a women's safety audit of our community. This entails creating an audit that addresses all safety issues and focuses on issues of safety to women. This might include adequate lighting and available working telephones throughout the community, safe walking paths, etc. The community will be asked to complete surveys and women's groups will be involved. The City has agreed to look at by-laws, policies, etc. that will improve the identified issues. Both these grants will require a part time temporary employee to do the work. Recruitment is a difficult issue for us at this time so finding a suitable applicant may cause problems with meeting the requirements of the grants. We will also be applying for a Law Foundation grant to produce informational packages on violence for youth, women with learning difficulties, literacy issues and cultural differences. These legal information packages will be available to the public, schools, etc.

The child care grant was funded to address areas of the province where early childhood development was falling below the provincial standard. Dawson Creek and Prince Rupert were identified as geographic areas where this was the case. SPCRS was chosen to submit a proposal to work with the child care stakeholders in the community to identify methods of improving the scoring of our children. The intent is to create a "hub" where children and families could access services including, but not limited to, early child development, parenting, etc. Existing services may relocate to the "hub" location as well as development of services to meet some identified gaps.

We recently lost the responsibility for providing Supported Child Development in the Fort St. John area. We will now only provide that service to Dawson Creek, Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge. Lay offs in Fort St. John resulted from the contract being changed.

Management Team is working closely with the Personnel and Practice Coordinators to ensure that this structure supports, motivates, directs and guides the practise of the front line employees. These positions have huge responsibilities and it will take some time to get them to the point where they have a relationship with all individual employees and can give the support needed for employees to do the best possible job.

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Management News (continued from page 4)

The Finance and Admin Department has adopted the new payroll system. We hope you like the new pay stubs. This required many late night hours and there are still some glitches that need to be worked out for the new payroll to be compatible with our accounting systems.

We are in the midst of a re-accreditation year so Managers, Personnel and Practice Coordinators as well as front line employees will be required to focus on ensuring we continue to meet the standards. This usually means some revision of policy, procedures, data collection, gathering clients and community feedback through surveys and employees ensuring that they are very aware and can answer questions about how they are expected to do the job. This is a big job for all of us and will culminate with several surveyors visiting our work sites later in the year. We will then receive the report and the results, hopefully accreditation for another four years.

JL Residence

Let's start with the best news first. JL attended a 6 week Salvation Army course and is now a soldier with a uniform in the Salvation Army! JL volunteers at the Thrift Store where he vacuums twice a week, puts out items, moves furniture and helps with the pick up. His favourite part is sorting cassette tapes and CD's to see what he can bring home. A close second is the coffee and visiting with everyone that comes in.



JL enjoyed Christmas with his family in Fort St. John and received many gifts including a 2 piece red tool box and tools. Thank you to the Mathias family!

Due to the nice weather, shovelling snow this winter is not proving as fruitful as JL would like, but he still hopes to save enough money to purchase a new amp. In the summer though, he was very successful earning money cutting lawns and was able to buy an electric drum set, which he plays every day. JL almost has a complete band, if he could only play all the instruments at once.

JL went to Camp Elkness in Prince George this year and met some new friends and visited with old ones. The weather was not great, but we still had a good time swimming in the lake every day and singing songs and telling stories by the campfire in the evenings. JL also played Bocce Ball, and made a face mask, sand art and a Native drawing that everyone helped color and signed.



JL had a busy fall attending BBQ's, birthday parties, a wedding, dances, going away parties, cars shows, and the Fall Fair. On top of that, he also went camping at Heart Lake where he went hiking with Trevor and Mick and had a great time hanging out with the guys. JL continues to work for Braemer Construction and it is the highlight of his week - they are great people to work for.

All-in-all a very busy season and we look forward to another great year.

*Submitted by
Coleen Cole, JL Residence staff*

Family Safety, Counselling & Support Services Department

Another Year Comes to a Close – and what a year it has been!

Hope everyone's holiday season brought some peace and relaxation. The Family Safety, Counselling and Support Services Department would like to share some program updates.

Mizpah continues to be extraordinarily busy with more women seeking shelter for a multitude of reasons. Affordable housing is definitely an escalating issue in our community and region; therefore more women are seeking shelter strictly for accommodation purposes. Mizpah welcomed Glenda Wagar to their fulltime team this fall and took on three new casuals in December (welcome Laurel, Jackie and Lesley). Mizpah also said farewell to Connie Buck who took on the position of Specialized Victim Services worker. Although she will be missed at the T-House, we are glad to have her onsite at the administration building. Mizpah staff participated in a retreat in November. The staff met at Deanna Sudnik's home (thank you Deanna) where everyone enjoyed a day of fun and leisure. Thank you to Annette, Sherry, Candy, Glenda, Elke, Jessie, and Deborah for their continued commitment to helping women and children in our community and beyond.



The **Chetwynd Safe Home** Program, coordinated by Cheryl Widdecombe, continues to be busy as well. This program relies on motel accommodation for women who are fleeing abusive situations. The vacancy rates pose a challenge to this program with the increased activity in Chetwynd due to the gas and oil industry. Thank you to Cheryl who continues to work in close partnership with the community, ensuring that women and children receive the services they request.



The **Chetwynd Outreach** Program said goodbye to Maureen Edwards this past fall. She left her position to pursue more lucrative prospects in the gas and oil industry. We are still looking for a new Outreach Worker for Chetwynd, so if you know of anyone who might be interested, please send them our way!

In the fall of 2005 we were all sad to say goodbye to Linda Woods, **Stopping the Violence** Counsellor. She decided to take an early retirement and get busy with enjoying life! Her work with women victims of abuse was an essential service to the community. This program is still seeking a replacement. We will let everyone know when a new Stopping the Violence Counsellor is hired.

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Family Safety, Counselling & Support Services Department

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This past summer, we were happy to welcome Colette Bourque on board as the new **Family Support** Counsellor. Colette came to SPCRS with a wealth of experience and training in the helping field. She continues to develop the program, partnering with community and taking on extra challenges with enthusiasm. This fall, she coordinated an information table for the local Health and Wellness Fair and is currently assisting in bringing a keynote speaker to the community to explore the issue of Attachment Disorder.



The **Children Who Witness Abuse** Program continues to support children in the community who have witnessed violence in their homes. Maureen Cristall, the CWWA counsellor enjoys working one-on-one and in group settings. She has been active in implementing the Violence is Preventable program in our community. This program has been instrumental in bringing the issue of family violence to the forefront in the school system and larger community. Maureen has partnered with both Crescent Park and Tremblay Elementary schools, working closely with the kids, parents and school staff.



The **Reconnect** Youth Program has seen several changes over the course of the past year. Early spring we said farewell to Nancy Prince and welcomed Jennifer LeRoux to the position of Reconnect Worker. Since Jennifer's arrival, the Reconnect Program has increased partnerships in the community, in particular, with the school district. The program also moved to a new location at the end of November. The new Reconnect site is located directly across from the Health Food Store downtown. This quaint little house provides the youth with more of a home setting where they can enjoy both the comfort of a cozy indoor environment and a private backyard. There are plans to purchase a barbeque in the spring!

The **Specialized Victim Services** Program has also been through a few changes. SVS worker, Deanna Sudnik left in the spring on maternity leave and Lurind Jeaneaux took on the temporary position. In the fall Deanna was awarded a position of Personnel and Practice Coordinator. Since this time, Lurind Jeaneaux has transferred to the new Dawson Creek Outreach Program position, making room for Connie Buck to take on the role of SVS worker. Now if you can keep all that straight in your head, you are in far better shape than most of us!

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Family Safety, Counselling & Support Services Department

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Police Based Victim Services, a contract administered by SPCRS, continues to work closely with the Specialized Victim Services Program in offering coordinated services to victims of crime. Gloria Stang, PBVS coordinator, continues to be busy attending to the needs of victims in our community.

In the fall SPCRS was awarded three new contracts – Dawson Creek Outreach which will be coordinated by Lurind Jeaneaux and located in the administration building, Tumbler Ridge Outreach, and Tumbler Ridge Children Who Witness Abuse. The Tumbler Ridge Services will be located at the Tumbler Ridge Health Centre and will hopefully have a worker in place in the New Year.

The Family Safety, Counselling and Support Services Department wishes everyone all the best in the New Year. I think this year is going to be a good one!

*Submitted by
Sian Lewis, Department Manager*

SF Residence

SF continues to do an excellent job with his daily mail run and every Wednesday he delivers the house recyclables to the recycling depot. Once a week, SF picks up Ken from Southview to go for walks, drive out to Pouce Coupe Park and afterwards find a place to have a treat before returning home. Twice a month, SF visits his Mom at her house and enjoys a great dinner, usually followed by a big helping of ice cream. SF likes to go out for lunch and supper with his friends and enjoys the time together. Other activities he enjoyed the past few months include swimming at the CDC pool, going for walks, touring stores in town and attending a Halloween Party at the Nawican. It is a tradition for SF to invite friends and family to his house to celebrate his birthday. He was very excited and could hardly wait to open all the nice gifts he received.

During the Christmas season SF attended a Christmas craft show, listened to Christmas music during a lunch at Sudeten Hall, watched the Christmas tree light up and toured Dawson Creek and Pouce Coupe to look at decorated houses and Christmas lights. He also helped to purchase gifts for his friends and family. SF spent the holidays with his family and returned home with a lot of presents.

Welcome to Ruth Richards and Keltie Jabs who joined the team and a welcome back to Kate Meier.

*Submitted by
SF Residence staff team*

Little Money Left for Food for Some BC Families

Did you Know?

- ◆ About one in five children in BC is poor
- ◆ Welfare rates have dropped to their lowest level since the 1980's
- ◆ 54% of BC food bank users are on welfare
- ◆ People on welfare are 3 times more likely to report hunger
- ◆ People with low incomes have more health problems and die younger
- ◆ Low income women are more likely to be overweight and/or obese
- ◆ Poor children are more likely to get sick and are less able to do well in school

What's left for Food After Shelter and Living Costs?				
Monthly Costs	Family of 4 (on welfare)	Single Parent 2 children (on welfare)	Family of 4 (low earned income)	Family of 4 (average income)
Disposable income	\$1495	\$1385	\$2218	\$4307
Cost of shelter	\$934	\$934	\$934	\$1212
Other daily living costs	\$563	\$387	\$606	\$671
Money needed to buy food (2005)	\$654	\$477	\$654	\$654
Money left	-\$656	-\$413	\$24	\$1770

How do poor families cope?

- ◆ Most families on welfare must rely on a food bank to help feed their family
- ◆ Low income families eat less fruit, vegetables and milk products because they can't afford them
- ◆ Most families on welfare must live in unsafe neighbourhoods with poor housing and unhealthy living conditions for children.

What can YOU do about poverty and hunger?

Having enough safe and healthy food is important for the health and future success of our children, our families and our seniors. Here are some ways you can help make this happen:

- ◆ Show your support by wearing the white band - the symbol of the 'Make Poverty History' campaign. Order your band at: www.makepovertyhistory.ca/e/whiteband.html

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What can YOU do about poverty and hunger?

- ◆ Buy local foods when available
- ◆ Ask local grocery stores, schools, hotels, hospitals and care homes to buy local foods
- ◆ Encourage your local food bank to offer a variety of healthy foods
- ◆ Support community food resources like community gardens, community kitchens, gleaning programs and Good Food Box programs by fund raising or volunteering your time.
- ◆ Support cooperative and low cost housing projects
- ◆ Form or join a local food policy council
- ◆ Write a letter to your local MLA and/or provincial Minister responsible for the policies that make poverty worse and ask for:
 - Fair welfare rates
 - Living wage rates
 - Funding for community-based employment and training programs
 - Affordable housing



From "The Cost of Eating in BC 2005" report published by the Community Nutritionists Council of BC and the Dieticians of Canada, BC Region

SB Residence

SB's recycling job is going very well. She has been able to save a little money and enjoys the special extra things she can afford for herself. During regular craft classes SB and her staff are creating lots of projects to decorate her room and apartment. SB likes to go out for supper and lunch with her friends. Her favourite places are the Dragon Palace and Boston Pizza. SB goes swimming every week and loves the music and whirlpool action the life-guard puts on for her. SB attended a Halloween Party and New Years Eve Party, where she was seen clapping to the music, nibbling on snacks and watching the dancers. Listening to music, browsing through stores and short drives are still considered favourite activities.

During the Christmas season SB was busy attending the Christmas tree light up and touring the town to look at all the Christmas decorations. On Christmas Day, SB opened her many presents, enjoyed Christmas music, and invited friends over for supper and a movie.

The team welcomes Ruth Richards and welcomes back Kate Meier.

*Submitted by
SB Residence staff team*

Take Back the Night

On the evening of September 21, 2005, South Peace Community Resources Society in Dawson Creek hosted a unique 'Take Back the Night' celebration. A group of women carrying placards that read "Women Unite! Take Back the Night!" walked 3 blocks from the SPCRS offices to the down town core. Fourteen businesses had stayed open to partner with SPCRS to raise awareness



about the issues of violence and fear that many women face daily. Each gave out a token of safety, like a small flashlight, a TBTN bookmark, a Transition House safety card, or a candle. Each woman carried a map marking the participating businesses, and recorded an alphabet letter posted at each place. When all the letters were unscrambled into a phrase, the 'map' could be entered into a draw box for donated door prizes at the last stop.

Our local Native dance troupe provided colourful street entertainment, and one of the staff dressed up as a Red Hat lady and handed out 75 helium balloons with "Take Back the Night" and www.spcrs.ca printed on them. Several of the businesses had entertainment in their stores: a violin player, a poetry reader, taped music, and a reading from a book.

Our final stop was a picture framing shop where women could have refreshments and listen to a lovely young lady sing. The door prizes were a hit, and ranged from a complimentary hair cut to a manicure.

In partnering with the businesses, we were able to make a public statement about our commitment to working together to make our community a safer place to live. We also helped create a greater awareness of the need to promote safety for girls and women in our city.

Submitted by Maureen Cristall, CWWA Counsellor

Children Who Witness Abuse Program

The Children Who Witness Abuse program continued to thrive through the fall and winter months, with a 2 week break over Christmas. During October, I was involved with the Learning Organization Workshops for all SPCRS employees. These included mini-meetings with staff from CCR&R, MY Residence and RC Residence. Our small staff groups brainstormed Objectives, Activities and Outcomes for programs we were initially unfamiliar with. As a result of our workshops, we all became more aware of some of the joys and challenges that other staff face. One common difficulty is the lack of enough relief staff and also suitable applicants for job openings.

I took a turn staffing the SPCRS information table at the Health and Wellness Fair at the mall. In November, Mizpah staff enjoyed a special Retreat day to renew our energy and visit with each other. We were gifted with treat bags of Body Shop lotions, ate a delicious potluck feast, played games, had facials and hand care demonstrations, learned exercises to enhance longevity, and went for a group hike to the Community Forest.

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Children Who Witness Abuse Program (continued from page 11)

November was also the month to plan our December 6 March and Memorial Service with several committee meetings. A Team Meeting was also held with the Specialized Victim Services counsellor, CWWA, Family Counsellor, and Outreach Worker. Many of us attended 2 full days of Suicide Prevention training, as well as a tear-jerking talk by Jeni Mayer on dating violence and domestic abuse.

December was busy with the December 6 Proclamation, March and Memorial Service. A few of us walked the cold winter streets, candles in mittened hands, behind our police car escort. We joined about 50 other people at the United Church for a service of Remembrance and Hope. We prayed, sang, lit candles, and pieced together a Peace Quilt that represented how our beauty and strength combines when we come together and support each other through pain, loneliness, and loss. We all enjoyed a gift of candles of hope, plus refreshments provided by SPCRS. December also brought the celebrations of the holidays with staff parties and dinners, as well as a lovely open house at MCFD offices.

The Violence is Preventable Program is up and running again at Parkhill Elementary School. From November 1 to January 31, a young group of 9 students from grades 1 to 3 are meeting for one hour each Tuesday to learn about feelings, family conflict, what abuse is, how to handle anger in a healthy way, safety, how alcoholism and substance abuse can affect children in the family, and that talking about problems is a big start to dealing with them. One of the school intervention workers co-facilitates the group and is indispensable to its success! Many thanks to the counsellors, teachers, principal and parents at Parkhill School for their support. I was lucky to be invited to the school turkey dinner in December. I saw a lot of happy children, parents and teachers.

The CWWA program has room for more young clients and school groups. I will be visiting various societies in the New Year and giving out pamphlets.

Submitted by Maureen Cristall, CWWA Counsellor

RC Residence

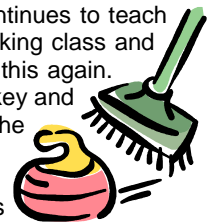
RC had a busy summer visiting Camp Aim Hi and then taking a trip to Kelowna. RC's staff got lost on the way to Kelowna and made the remark that Calgary might be closer by now, but Ron's heart was set on Kelowna. In Kelowna he visited the mini zoo and saw many exotic animals. His least favourite was the ostrich. He toured a jammary and an apiary and learned a lot. By now everyone has had a chance to see RC in his trendy new clothes that he bought during the trip.

In addition to these trips, RC managed to take on a couple of new recycling customers and continues to teach the Monday math class at the Opportunity Center. Everybody had a chance to attend RC's cooking class and learned how to prepare Sushi. The class got great reviews and RC is looking forward to doing this again. Special Olympics activities have started up again, and along with the usual bowling, floor hockey and weight lifting, RC also enrolled in curling. His coaches are very happy with his progress and he really enjoys it.

Christmas was a very good time for RC. He got a karaoke machine and is planning on inviting his friends over to help break it in. RC and his staff braved the bad roads on Christmas and went to Fort St. John to visit his family. His Mom prepared a huge lunch for them and everybody left very full and happy. RC and his team are looking forward to sharing the new adventures 2006 will bring. Take care everybody.

We welcome Kate Meier and Truly Shearing to the team.

Submitted by RC Residence staff team



Violence is Preventable Videos Being Made



On January 31, 2006, a video crew of 2 flew to Dawson Creek to interview Maureen Cristall (CWWA counsellor), Jim Rowland (school counsellor), Bryan Harman (school principal), and a mother and her 2 young sons who participated in the Violence is Preventable pilot program last year at Parkhill School. Hilary and David (the camera man), run the Friday Street Production Company out of Victoria. They have produced excellent videos for the BC/Yukon Society of Transition Houses over the years, for example: Seen But Not Heard, What About Us?, It's Not Like I Hit Her, and What's Age Got to do With It? Their current project is to make 3 videos for the Violence is Preventable (VIP) Program that has been in the works for several years.

The first phase of the project was to write a detailed VIP manual that was approved by educational administrators. This manual, along with posters and brochures, have been distributed to Transition Houses and CWWA programs across BC and the Yukon. The second phase was to train CWWA counsellors from 8 different regions in the province as a pilot project. Some counsellors presented the program to teachers/administrators/parents, usually at staff meetings. Others approached teachers and were allowed to present Violence is Preventable material to elementary and high school classes during 2 to 4 classes. Results of evaluations were tallied and overall, the pilot project was a resounding success in each community.

Phase 3 is the making of videos to use as teaching tools when making presentations. The first video will be for teachers, administrators, counsellors, and parents. It will increase awareness about violence in relationships, and its effects on child witnesses.

It will be a tool that explains the benefits of having the VIP program in their schools. The second video is for secondary school students in CAPP classes. It will increase student awareness about violence in relationships and break the silence by making it safe for youth to speak up in groups and in schools. It will also model positive ways to deal with conflict and help break the cycle of violence. The third video is for elementary school students. It will model how to keep safe and ask for help. It will show a model of a group of children their age to remove fear and apprehension about being in a group. Study guides will accompany the videos.

It was exciting to be asked to partake in the interviews. I talked about the group process, the positive feedback we got, and the posters we made. David videotaped the children's posters on Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Families and how it affects the children. He also recorded the Group Rules poster we had written with the children during their first VIP session, and signed. We referred to these 'agreements' during most sessions to remind the children that they had written the rules. The follow up phone call I received from Shahnaz Rahman, Coordinator of Children's Services in Vancouver, stated that the video crew was very pleased with the interviews we did, and that the VIP Program had just received funding for more training and staff hours for the next 3 years! Good news! This program reaches children and youth who would not usually be involved with CWWA counselling. The partnership with the schools is a big step forward. I am grateful to every one who helped make this project and video possible in Dawson Creek.

Submitted by Maureen Cristall, CWWA Counsellor