

**For immediate release**

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## **Remembering Jannit: A Night to Celebrate Community Activism**

Respected and beloved community activist Jannit Rabinovitch will be remembered ten years after her passing at a special evening this Friday, January 27, at Fairfield Community Centre, where local activists, leading thinkers, and friends and family of Jannit will reflect on her life and legacy and the state of her style of activism a decade on.

Jannit Rabinovitch was a tireless advocate and activist on behalf of Greater Victoria's most stigmatized populations of women – women living homeless, in sex work, experiencing violence, the ones who struggled to access basic services and supports because nothing fit their needs. She was a special friend to Peers Victoria, the non-profit run by and for people with sex work backgrounds that's hosting Friday's event in the Garry Oak Room.

*Remembering Jannit: Community Activism 10 Years On* will feature speakers and a facilitated panel reflecting on Jannit's legacy of community building, leadership and progressive values. The evening will focus on the style of "by and for" activism and feminist organizing that was Jannit's passion, and will look at the collaborative, community-building models of social justice that Jannit worked to help put in place throughout her life. Her leadership and unflinching commitment to grassroots activism continues to inspire those who knew her.

"Jannit believed deeply in a future of greater equality, justice and empowerment," says Jannit's daughter Hannah Rabinovitch, head of the organizing committee for Friday's event. "Her optimistic vision for the future helps guide me in my life. Reflecting on her memory at this event will remind us all of the greater possibilities."

Jannit was one of the co-founders of Peers Victoria in 1995, collaborating with sex workers on what was then a radical concept for a sex-worker-led non-profit. She was a key figure in the early days of a project that eventually became Sandy Merriman House women's shelter. She was a proud lesbian activist and a brilliant strategist who knew how to connect diverse people with each other and with resources so that positive and inclusive community change could happen.

The diverse speakers and panelists at Friday's event include local and provincial politicians; long-time rights activists speaking on sex work, homelessness and women's organizing; and others able to place Jannit's work and beliefs into the "big picture" around feminist and women's organizing in B.C., then and now.

The lineup features Victoria Coun. Charlayne Thornton Joe; community activist Rose Henry; Peers co-founder Barb Smith; Nancy Poole, executive director of the BC Centre for Excellence in Women's Health; MLA Maurine Karagianis; Peers board member and Tent City activist Flora Pagan; sex work activists Sadie and Sarah; and Bridges for Women executive director Victoria Pruden. Jody Paterson, a former Executive Director of Peers Victoria, will MC the evening.

In the collaborative spirit of Jannit (and her love of sharing food), this event is an appetizer potluck. Please bring finger food to share. Doors open at 6:45 p.m. and speakers get underway around 7:30 p.m. A fundraiser for Peers Victoria in Jannit's memory will be launched at the event.

"Peers Victoria has been around for 21 years old and we are still being reminded on a daily basis how important it is that sex workers have an organization to come to that is their own, filled with people who have had similar experiences, and who understand, on a visceral level, what stigma means," notes Peers Executive Director Rachel Phillips. "Jannit understood that, and did so much to create and sustain those kinds of organizations. Her legacy lives on."

***For more information:***

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**Peers web site: [www.safersexwork.ca](http://www.safersexwork.ca)**