



Annual General Meeting, 2012

PEERS Victoria Resources Society
#1 – 744 Fairview Road, Victoria
Wednesday June 19th, 2013
4:30 – 5:00 pm Open House
5:00 – 7:00 pm Key Note Speaker & AGM

www.peers.bc.ca

Executive Director's Report, 2012

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Casey

I am delighted to speak as the interim Executive Director of PEERS Victoria Resource Society. Marion Little, PEERS' current Executive Director, is away on medical leave until September 3, 2013 and we all wish her a speedy recovery.

For those who are new to PEERS, we were founded in 1995 by and for sex workers with the support of community allies. PEERS is an impressive example of grassroots community development, providing programs and services to people who have been alienated and isolated from mainstream society because of their involvement in the sex industry. Many who participate in PEERS' programs and services are reluctant to access other social services, and many say we are the only place they feel safe and accepted. The people who have accessed our services tell us they have had their lives dramatically affected by PEERS in a profound and positive way.

PEERS Victoria is a registered Canadian Charity. Most of our funding is provincial, and the rest is contributed by charitable foundations, the local Health Authority, local service groups, community groups communities, and private donors. Our support base is diverse, ranging from local police departments and businesses to a variety of faith-based groups to people who advocate for the decriminalization of sex work. PEERS stands for health, safety and the human rights and dignity of all sex workers. We work endlessly to ensure sex workers' voices are heard and their basic needs are met.

PEERS and its allies organized its first ever *Sex Workers' Rights are Human Rights Solidarity March* that occurred on Saturday, June 8, 2013. This event was organized to show public support for Bedford, Lebovitch and Scott in their courageous fight against Canada's unjust prostitution laws. In attendance were several sex workers, community supporters, and Randall Garrison, Member of Parliament Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca. Speakers included Dr. Fran Shaver (Concordia University) and Lisa Ordell (PEERS' Board member). On September 28, 2010, sex workers and their allies celebrated Justice Himel's landmark ruling that would strike down three major Criminal Code of Canada provisions that in effect, make prostitution against the law – ruling that these laws violate the right to liberty and security that is guaranteed in Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Himel's decision states that the harm done to sex workers through the criminalization of prostitution outweighs any harm done to the community. This decision was appealed by the Attorney General, and the case was heard at the Supreme Court of Canada on June 13, 2013. I had the fortunate opportunity to be present at this monumental event.

Reports follow from each of our board committees and from each of our staffed programs detailing the outstanding efforts of the entire PEERS team in 2012.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your dedication and heartfelt contributions that have made this organization what it is today. Without you, PEERS would not exist. I am honoured to serve alongside the PEERS staff, board, volunteers, and donors as we work together towards increased safety, justice, equity, and wellness in our community.

Co-Chairs' Report, 2012

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Phillips and Susan Strega

Board of Directors

2012 was a great year for PEERS in terms of board stability, with Amita Vulmiri, Brad Weldon, Caitlin Janzen, Candace McKivett, Hannah Rabinovitch, Lisa Ordell, Rachel Phillips, Sinead Charbonneau and I continued as board members. Since then, we've had some departures: Amita resigned to accept a position with the CBA/CIDA young lawyers international program and was posted to Kenya. Sinead left to focus on her board work with the Vancouver Island Human Rights Coalition and will be attending law school at the University of Toronto in 2014. Lisa Ordell departed to concentrate on her master's program in Educational Psychology at the University of Victoria. And we have two other members leaving us soon – Hannah is headed to SFU to study public policy, and Caitlin will be doing doctoral studies at York University. Although we have and will miss the contributions of these board members, we also welcomed new board members over the last year. Carolyn Showler has made a very welcome return to the PEERS board – Carolyn brings many years of experience from her previous stint on the PEERS board, as well as from her street nurse experiences. We are also very pleased to welcome two new members in 2013; Flora Pagan, who has worked for several allied organizations locally such as Streets to Homes, Sandi Merriman House, and The Women's Sexual Assault Centre and Leah Shumka, who is a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Addictions Research of BC.

Volunteers

PEERS is very fortunate to have many fantastic volunteers, and this year we've been especially lucky to have Yvette Sellers volunteering as their coordinator.

Shannon Alderdice - Hot Pink

Joanne Hauge - Knitting Group

Heather Robertson - Creative Writing Class

Dr. Valorie Cunningham and Lynne Campbell - Medical Services

Holly Clow - RV Stocking & Cleaning

Kat Lenaghan - Night Outreach

Adrian Ferris - Cleaning

Karl Schreiner - Handyman

Ashleigh Gionet - Fundraising

Monika Joosok, Tamara Raine and Jennifer Young - Lunches

Gloria Hoepfner - Donation pick up

Brette Lord - Organizing Donations

Braden Young – Computer Support

Vanessa Butler, Michelle Lane, Katie Bell – Pitching in when needed

We are also very fortunate to be supported by volunteers from Saanich Baptist Church (their annual Spring Cleaning) and Temple Emanu-El Synagogue (Mitzvah Day: plants and flowers). These volunteers contributed to our efforts to make PEERS a very welcoming environment. Various other faith groups have also contributed both volunteer hours and much-needed funds.

Staff

Like many other non-profits, we continue to be challenged by the current funding environment. We recognize the efforts of all of our staff, who do a great deal with limited resources. We would especially like to thank Rebecca Taylor and Juli Savage for their hard work addressing the contract and billing changes in our daytime employment readiness program. Our Executive Director, Marion, has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of PEERS in the region and her warmth and passion for community development and collaboration is a tremendous asset within the organization. We would also like to congratulate Thea Cunningham of the Night Outreach Program for winning a *Courage to Come Back Award* this year. Finally, we were so fortunate in recent months to have the leadership of Lauren Casey during Marion's leave. Lauren is a PEERS staff alumni and a leader in the Canadian movement for sex worker's rights. Her positive presence at PEERS has not only inspired the staff and board alike, but also increased PEERS participation in and awareness of national collaborations among organizations across Canada – Stella, Power, Maggie's, BC Coalition, to name a few - who have joined together to promote decriminalization and increase safety and access to justice among sex workers in Canada.

Activism

Red Umbrella Day is an annual day of action on violence against sex workers that always falls on December 17, and last year Sinead Charbonneau, Chandra Melting Tallow and Caitlin Gallupe organized PEERS' participation. We had lots of media coverage, and great support for the event from Discovery Coffee and Hernandez Restaurant. Another event that raised awareness about the conditions of sex work took place at Legacy Gallery during Crime Victims Awareness Week in April. This was a joint venture with the Somebody's Mother, Sister or Daughter sex workers' research project from the University of Victoria. We would like to thank Kevin Lastiwka for participating in the event and Todd Wellman and the entire Special Victims Unit for their ongoing collaboration with PEERS.

Money matters

This year, we've supplemented the program funding we receive from VIHA, The United Way and the provincial government with a number of fundraising efforts, such as Hot Pink, an annual fundraising event made possible by donated entertainment from the Cheesecake Burlesque Revue. This year's Hot Pink event was a sold out show and our most financially successful to date and we have to thank Caitlin Janzen for her vision and countless hours of volunteer time. We would sincerely like to thank the individual and business donors who have supported PEERS and our public events this year. Last year we developed a monthly donor program and if you are in a position where you can contribute to PEERS in this way, then please pick up and fill in one of the forms available at the Information table.

Finance Committee & Treasurer's Report, 2012

Committee Members: Candace McKivett, Hannah Rabinovitch, Marion Little (ex officio)

Treasurer: Candace McKivett

PEERS, like many grassroots nonprofits, has faced immense financial challenges over the last few years with annual budget contractions due to the current funding climate for charitable agencies serving our most vulnerable community members. In 2012 PEERS faced the daunting task of shifting to the Work BC Integrated Case Management billing contract for our Elements Program and Drop-In Centre from the previous direct funding through the Ministry of Social Development. This presented a significant challenge for staff to learn the new arduous ICM billing system while simultaneously running programming.

Despite these challenges staff have made the best of ICM and continue to persevere through these difficulties. PEERS finished the 2012 fiscal year end on target, with a small surplus and a small increase in budget from 2011.

In 2012 Executive Director Marion Little began the Dinner and Movie monthly donation campaign. The campaign is requesting members of the community to contribute what they would normally pay for a night out, \$20, \$50 or \$75 as a monthly donation to PEERS. If 800 members of our community decide to donate \$25 per month, PEERS could entirely fund the drop-in centre and Elements program and be freed from the politically based changes to funding we have experienced in recent years. We are excited to watch this campaign expand in the coming year.

Human Resources Committee Report, 2012

Committee Members: Susan Strega, Brad Weldon

In consultation with the Executive Director and the PEERS staff, the HR committee has been working on developing new policies and updating existing policies and practices to continue strengthening the work environment and service delivery practices at PEERS. There has been a focus on organizing development and wellness activities for staff, as well as updating key policies and practices that affect safety, violence prevention, hiring and conflict resolution processes.

The HR Committee has also been working on updating hiring policies in consultation with PEERS board and staff - new elements staff was hired this year, and we welcomed Lauren Casey as interim Executive Director. The HR Committee is committed to continue building a more supportive and

inclusive workplace at PEERS, and is looking forward to working on additional collaborative activities with the Executive Director and the PEERS staff in the coming year.

Fundraising Committee Report, 2012

Committee Members: Rachel Phillips, Caitlin Janzen, Scott Vannan, and Tracie Fawkes

Fundraising at PEERS went well this year with several great fundraisers and ongoing help from our generous donors. Our major 2012 fundraiser was Hot Pink, which grossed over \$10,000 in one evening! We would like to thank the staff, contractors and volunteers who worked very hard to organize this event. We would also like to thank the many businesses who donated to our silent auction and bar. Of course, Hot Pink would not be possible without the hard work of the Cheesecake Burlesque Revue. PEERS is grateful for our continuing relationship with the Cheesecakes.

PEERS raised \$43,911 dollars in total from fundraising and donations from individual and corporate donors and we give a heartfelt thanks to these individuals and groups. PEERS' fundraising and donation revenue experienced growth in 2012 and we have the donors to thank for that.

We would also like to thank the *Ghosts of the Plaza* group, including Sarah Smith, Trinda Reed, Sadie Forbes, Wendy M. and the rest of the cast and crew for a wonderful play about the history of the Plaza Hotel and sex workers in the region, and for making PEERS a recipient of the proceeds in their 2012 and 2013 shows.

The Fundraising Committee has a number of goals this upcoming year. We are looking forward to another successful year of Hot Pink and we will continue to hold one annual fundraiser which is aimed at community education and awareness of the social service sector and issues related to sex work. In early 2013, renowned poet, artist and activist, Chrystos, donated a poetry reading and a number of items for auction to PEERS. This evening fundraiser raised close to \$2000 and was a powerful and rare opportunity to consider queer, indigenous and sex worker voices through the humour and beauty of Chystos' poetry. We will continue to look for opportunities to combine our goals of fundraising and public education through creative events in the remainder of 2013.

We are also looking forward to continuing to promote our direct donation campaign, which offers donors a chance to make a very significant contribution to PEERS with ease in smaller automatic increments. Finally, we will be developing a donor information package, which speaks to the value of PEERS in the community and our cross-sectorial partnerships. Alongside this booklet we are also gathering information to better understand our donor base, including their hopes for the organization.

Staff Report: Elements Program, 2012

Staff: Rebecca Taylor and Juli Savage

Overview

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2012 Totals
New Class Participants	15	0	1	2	-	1	4	4	8	2	2	-	39
Participants Graduated (6mo)	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	7
1:1 Peer Counselling Support	6	10	5	13	6	14	+ no data	2	15	3	+ no data	+ no data	54
Total Participants per Month	15	9	10	12	9	10	10	11	16	15	16	14	compilation N/A
New ICM Registrants	N/A	N/A	N/A	9*	1	-	2	2	4	2	3	-	23

* 6 of the 9 April ICM registrants are transitioning clients from the old MHSD contract to the new subcontract system

+ 1:1 PEERS Counselling Support records are not available for July, November, & December due to ICM overload

Successes

- Lots of new participants and attendance for Elements program.
- Multiple individual successes for participants, such as getting jobs, qualifying for Persons With Disability assistance (PWD), housing, meeting goals, referrals to treatment and other programming,
- Great guest speakers including: Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS); John Caulder, Trauma Therapist; Women's Centre – Red Umbrella Day; University 101; FoodSafe; Mindful Meditation; Laughter Yoga; Heidi Exner from AVI, Health Educator, Dvora Levin (poetry) and Heather Robinson (creative writing.)
- Engaging participants in relationship building through crafts (baby mukluks, red lanterns for Red Umbrella day, vision boards, origami, breast plate project with Heidi Exner, and card making).
- Significant one-to-one success making meaningful connections with clients.

Quotes from our clients

One participant said, "I like to go to bed early because then it means I come to PEERS sooner ☺"

One participant has come back after being away for almost 2 years saying, "I really needed to come back here."

Homelessness is a real and present struggle. A client told me, "I don't know what I am going to do." She had nowhere to stay or go.

Another client said to me when talking about needing help, "That's the thing with PEERS. There's no f***ing around when it comes to helping people. You guys get shit done!"

Staff Report: Day Outreach, 2012

Staff: Liza Slavica

Overview

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2012 Totals
# Clients Served	27	35	36	36	40	38	37	25	31	42	27	31	n/a
Housing Subsidy Intakes	2	5	7	9	9	6	8	4	5	8	4	2	69
Housing Referrals	6	13	12	8	13	9	10	7	9	7	5	11	110
Clients Housed	1	4	5	1	3	4	6	2	2	4	5	3	40
Res. Tenancy Act Support	0	0	3	2	2	4	3	2	2	1	1	2	22
MHSD Appt.s Support	20	23	25	28	16	27	12	7	15	27	18	23	241
Food Security	17	21	29	25	30	13	15	7	17	30	12	26	242
Medical Appt.s Support	8	18	19	20	18	21	9	8	23	13	31	16	204
School Supplies Assist.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
Detox/Stabilization Ref.	1	1	0	2	4	3	1	3	3	6	7	2	33
Court/Corrections	3	0	0	1	1	4	2	1	7	1	2	4	26

Support													
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Successes

The biggest program success is the ongoing collaboration between PEERS and several housing orientated services and organizations. Securing movers, financial assistance and damage deposits, household furniture and goods, plus joint advocacy with housing providers has increased the success of housing PEERS clients. The tenacity and support of many colleagues in social service agencies have been invaluable in keeping people housed and food secure however; chronic challenges in accessing services such as detox, stabilization, and rehabilitation for drug/alcohol/mental health/ and recovery concerns remains a consistent barrier for many. Throughout the past year many community collaborative events such as Project Connect and health treatment at Victoria Native Friendship Center and Access Health have been tremendously successful. In addition, our Public Health Nurse and Street Outreach nurses have provided prenatal care and administered flu shots, in addition to providing a site to host the annual Papapolooza event for women. Continuous support and daily collaboration from Pacifica Housing, Native Friendship Center, Cool Aid, Our Place, the Salvation Army, the ACT and VICOT teams, the Mustard Seed, AVI , and outreach from the Ministry of Social Development have been absolutely critical for supporting clients in housing and health. The ability of PEERS to provide the BC Housing Subsidy also makes a critical difference in client safety and financial realities, and their ability to be and remain housed in Victoria. The biggest program success is that several “challenging to house” women have secured affordable, safe, and secure housing.

Quotes from our clients

“I love. Love, love my home! It is so beautiful and perfect! Now I can really start again!”

For another client it was more blunt, “I’ve been homeless basically for 14 years and have nothing. I got this place and don’t know how to do it! We gotta fill out these forms!”

“This is the fresh start to my own life. Away from my relationship, on my own terms, this in the beginning of my own healthy life lived for me.”

As one woman exclaimed, “I can’t believe I got a team of movers! I have a beautiful new home and it is paid for! And all mine!”

In regards to the housing subsidy, “It’s giving the security to know that this month I am okay. If it takes some time to be where I need to be next, at least I know I can make choices and manage this on my own right now”

“I can’t believe I got a team of movers! I have a beautiful new home and it is paid for! And all mine!”

Staff Report: Night Outreach, 2012

Staff: Thea Cunningham, Kristine Porter, Tammy Arnault, Liza Slavica, Megan Lewis, Tracie Fawkes, Alicia Koorn, Krista Morrison, Juli Savage, Kelly Ransome, Teresa Riggs

Overview

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2012 Totals
# Individual Clients Served	127	127	180	225	140	180	152	80	147	137	146	51	1692** 141/monthly ave
STW Visits to RV (points of contact)	348	305	269	329	258	215	254	160	352	286	371	135	3282
Peer Counselling Support	98	122	110	159	100	95	206	56	68	69	58	67	949 (700 over 30min)
Rigs Out	880	530	884	840	616	501	1359	229	280	150	500	444	7213
Rigs In	280	180	42	80	85	70	315	0	0	0	0	0	1052
New Faces	29	17	7	12	9	8	0	10	4	4	2	9	111
Lunches Served	351	263	260	327	251	203	179	169	149	136	216	119	2623
Bad Dates Reported	0	2	3	7	8	7	2	3	5	0	0	2	39
Pregnant	34	20	10	9	5	4	1	4	3	1	2	2	95
Mental Health/ Addictions Referrals	26	28	35	38	43	39	4	7	28	8	9	11	276
Social Services Referrals	7	16	22	34	52	48	52	26	27	16	19	22	331
Legal Aid Referrals	0	4	3	9	18	11	21	18	0	0	0	0	84

Medical Care Referrals	40	35	25	34	46	34	55	42	11	7	8	10	347
Safety Issue Referrals	10	18	20	17	30	28	43	25	23	7	9	9	239
Trauma Recovery Referrals	6	14	19	14	27	18	55	32	6	2	2	6	201
Emergency Shelter Referrals	19	22	30	42	59	32	66	44	23	12	19	28	396
Food Security	16	19	25	33	48	62	67	68	27	30	42	52	489
Housing	62	46	57	64	76	65	60	76	26	22	36	47	637
PEERS Day Programs	160	69	64	68	93	86	87	80	100	64	109	96	1076

****Individuals served from month to month may include repeat clients.**

Successes

Increase in client numbers, happy clients, clients accessing night outreach van and going to PEERS Drop-in Centre during the day and attending Elements. The wonderful volunteers that have organized the Outreach clothing and supply room.

Quotes

"It is very cold outside, please bring more coats, gloves and socks"

"Thank you for being here"

Staff Report: Drop-In 2012

Staff: Kristine Porter, Thea Cunningham

Overview

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2012 Totals
# Individual Clients Served (approx.)	32	28	26	28	30	32	45	45	45	45	45	45	Avg. is 37/mo

Total Points of Contact	158	183	167	128	197	189	229	280	257	277	271	221	2,557
Bus Tickets Distributed	64	56	52	56	60	64	90	90	90	65	65	65	817
Food Security (breakfast/lunch/food bank/bread)	53	61	56	43	66	63	76	93	86	92	90	74	853
Computer Skills – General	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	10	10	10	10	40
Resume Creation	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	1	0	0	1
Resume Update	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	2	0	0	0	2
Job Search	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Housing – Homeless	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	3	0	2	2	7
Housing – Unstable	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	3	3	3	5	14
Housing – Res Tenancy Act	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Housing – Other	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Violence – Domestic Abuse	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	2	0	2
Violence – BADE Date Report	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Violence – Bad Date Support	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Violence – Other	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	0	0	0	0	0
Grooming (clothing, hygiene supplies)	32	28	26	28	30	32	45	45	45	45	45	45	802
Harm Reduction – Safer Sex	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	3	3	3	3	8
Harm Reduction –	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	0	0	0	0

Needle X	stats	stats	stats	stats	stats	stats	stats	stats					
1:1 Peer Counselling Support	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	No stats	15	15	15	15	60

Services provided also include

- Advocacy
- Referrals to community agencies
- Crisis Intervention
- Access to physician and public health nurse

Program Update

The Drop-in Centre changed midway through 2012. The new Drop-in Centre Facilitator position was created in part to bridge the gap between night outreach and daytime. This has been successful as we are seeing an increase in night outreach clients accessing the Drop-in Centre more frequently.

With Yvette coming on board as our Volunteer Coordinator, we have developed a strong team of volunteers. The donation room (former board room) has been set up in a very organized manner, with easy access to supplies and goods. The library has now been set up in the outreach office for staff who wish to access resources.

Joanne continued over the year to provide knitting workshops on Wednesdays. Throughout November and December, we ran a Monday craft group where we made homemade gifts for people to give out for Christmas. A lot of people appreciated this, because it allowed them to give gifts, which they otherwise couldn't afford.

Successes

- Volunteer coordinator position.
- High volume of clients accessing services, leading to increases in capacity among staff .
- Implemented program structure and processes.
- Created a warm, welcoming environment for clients to access resources.
- Clients seem comfortable seeking support from all employees in the drop-in centre.

Quotes

"The energy in here feels so positive"

"I love the staff that work here"

"PEERS is my safe place"

"I come to PEERS so I can focus on myself"

Heartfelt thanks to our dedicated 2012 volunteers!

Board members

Susan Strega, Rachel Phillips, Brad Weldon, Caitlin Janzen, Candace McKivett, Hannah Rabinovitch, Lisa Ordell, Rachel Phillips, Sinead Charbonneau, Amita Vulimiri and Carolyn Showler

Program Volunteers

Yvette Sellers (Volunteer Coordinator), Shannon Alderdice (Spa Day), Joanne Hauge (Knitting Group) Heather Robertson (Creative Writing Class),

Operational Volunteers

Dr. Valorie Cunningham and Lynne Campbell (Medical Services), Holly Clow (Van Stocking & Cleaning), Adrian Ferris (Cleaning), Karl Schreiner (Handyman), Monika Joosok, Tamara Raine and Jennifer Young (Lunches), Gloria Hoepfner (Donation pick-up), Brette Lord (Organizing Donations), Brad Webster (Auto Repairs), Braden Young (Computer support), Kat Lenaghan (Night Outreach) Vanessa Butler , Michelle Lane, Katie Bell (Pitching in when needed)

Seasonal Volunteers

Saanich Baptist Church (Spring Cleaning), Temple Emanu-El Synagogue (Mitzvah Day: plants and flowers)

Fundraising Volunteers

Ashleigh Gionet, Scott Vannan, Shannon Alderdice and the Cheesecake Burlesque Revue

Deep gratitude to our hard-working 2012 staff & contractors!

Rebecca Taylor, Juli Savage, Liza Slavica, Thea Cunningham, Kristine Porter, Patricia O'Byrne, Tammy Arnault, Liza Slavica, Megan Lewis, Tracie Fawkes, Alicia Koorn, Krista Morrison, Teresa Riggs, Sarah Stewart