

WOMEN

making waves

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Hip Hop Culture

Misogyny is just the beginning... how will it end?



By Angela Marie MacDougall



BATTERED WOMEN'S
SUPPORT SERVICES

What's The Story

- The hip hop industry garners over ten billion dollars a year
- 70% of mainstream hip hop is consumed by white men
- 4 companies, Viacom, ABC Radio, Clear Channel and Entercom command 2/3 of all news radio
- 5 media conglomerates command 80% of all broadcast and cable television viewing
- 90% of record labels, radios, magazines and retailers disseminating hip hop related products are white-owned

Hip-hop was born in the Bronx almost four decades ago as a form of cultural expression in marginalized communities. It quickly emerged as a vehicle for African American empowerment and political activism and evolved to a misogynistic and homophobic, glorifying violence and racist caricature. Where once "tell it like it is" lyrics that spoke for oppressed people, today mainstream hip hop videos are stereotypes and nearly identical where men in fancy cars throw money at the camera while silent semi-naked women convulse in the background. Mainstream hip hop culture is a manifestation of the intersection of misogyny, race, culture, commerce and gender ground down in its purest form. These themes are explored in the ground breaking film *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes* filmed by former college football player now anti violence educator Byron Hurt.

Big Boyz

In the film, author Kevin Powell says, "We live in a society where manhood is all about conquering and violence.... And what we don't realize is that ultimately that kind of manhood ultimately kills you."

Violence in visual media is all around us, and has been with us before hip hop and the hyper-masculine thug has been an enduring figure for many years in mainstream film and print. American culture is the culture where many Canadians default to, as noted in the film by professor Michael Dyson, "When you think

about American society, the notion of violent masculinity is at the heart of American identity." He's talking about the outlaw cowboy in American history, the cop who plays by his own rules, the soldier who defeats nations all on his own to the hyper-masculine thug of gangster rap; violent masculinity is a deeply entrenched symbol of American manhood itself. "America is a very hyper-masculine, hyper-aggressive nation," filmmaker Byron Hurt says. "So it stands to reason that a rapper like 50 Cent can be commercially palatable in a nation that supports a culture of violence."

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Though it originated within African American communities hip hop culture has been adopted in part by and is very popular with brown and red youth in Latin and Indigenous communities in US and Canada.

For many young men and boys, hyper-masculinity can not be separated from race and class. Young men of colour and Indigenous men growing up are being socialized to be men, being told that as men they are entitled to be powerful, have power and what it means to be powerful in the context of systemic racism/classism. Anti-violence educator Jackson Katz explains it, "...but you don't have a

lot of real power, one thing that you do have access to is your body and your ability to present yourself physically as somebody who's worthy of respect. And I think that's one of the things that accounts for a lot of the hyper-masculine posturing by a lot of young men of color and a lot of working class white guys as well. Men who have more power, men who have financial power and workplace authority and forms of abstract power like that don't have to be as physically powerful because they can exert their power in other ways."

A Dime A Dozen

Objectified bodies of women are everywhere. Images of our lips, our eyes, our hair, our breasts, our butts, our legs on magazine covers and TV screens are used to sell everything from soup to car parts to travel destinations to... So who cares? What does that have to do with anything? Aren't they "only pictures" or "fantasy representation?" There are real-life implications for viewers and consumers, the images and the implied meaning wash over the viewer. As Byron Hurt says, "Some people say that it's just boys being boys, but I think it has a lot to do with boys figuring out early that girls are there for us to sexually objectify or to be our sexual playthings."

Writer and actor Sarah Jones explains, "The image of scantily-clad women (in hip hop videos) is supposed to affirm some image of masculinity, and the idea is, these men are so important and so powerful, and these women conversely are so dime a dozen... that they don't matter, they're just eye candy, they're worthless."

At Battered Women's Support Services young women (15 – 23) who access our STV counselling and crisis services are trying to find their place and identity within these images and attitudes. "I hate walking down the hall and having boys say if I am a '10' or

not," said a young woman who after being beaten by her boyfriend was referred to BWSS by her school counsellor

So Which Way is the Way Out?

How can men take responsibility for their socialization, expressions of misogyny and homophobia? How can we foster affirming cultural expression in our communities?

You tell us...

Battered Women's Support Services wants to hear from you...email us at strategicinterventions@bwss.org

Responses will be printed in our next issue of Women Making Waves.

Who Decides What We Will Consume?

There is no mystery to the packaging of hip hop formulaic hard core "thug" rappin' with women's body parts gyrating in the background. Mainstream media doesn't appear to filter any other representations through. And they do exist, Vancouver artists Bracken Hanuse, jbTheFirstLady, Rapsure, and Curtis Clearsky to name four. What is the market for mainstream hip hop? It seems that consumers want to consume stereotypes of blackness and notions of what is "urban" that appears to be driven by suburban mostly ethnically "white" consumers—who make up the majority of commercial hip hop consumers. While at the same time people of colour and Indigenous people continue to be willing to consume the images of one-dimensional "blackness" devoid of social responsibility. Jackson Katz observed, "Yet young people of color are being presented with this idea that somehow these people represent us, and they're cool and they're going to stand in for 'us' against the white power structure, while they're completely subservient to that white power structure. It's really an ironic, sad reality."

Sources

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BWSS PRESENTS



FALL 2008

Cultural Engagement in Preventing Violence Against Women

BWSS hosts a special showing of Byron Hurts acclaimed film **Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes**. A panel discussion follows with women, youth, men, local hip hop performers will be joined by a very special guest to discuss cultural & community engagement for solution building to end violence against women

An official selection of the 2006 Sundance Film Festival **Hip Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes** provides a riveting examination of representations of manhood in hip-hop culture. Byron Hurt, former college quarterback, gender violence prevention

educator and longtime hip hop fan, pays tribute to hip-hop while challenging the rap music industry to take responsibility for too often perpetuating destructive, deeply conservative styles of manhood that glamorize sexism, violence and homophobia. Taking his camera from the street to the recording studio to the corridors of industry power, Hurt elicits fascinating insights into hip-hop masculinity. The film is at once gripping and educational in its fearless, unflinching engagement with issues of race, violence against women and the corporate exploitation of youth culture.

Check www.bwss.org often for current information on this and other BWSS sponsored events or email strategicinterventions@bwss.org



courage on the frontline

It has been documented in many countries, such as Australia, the United States, the U.K and Canada, that domestic violence is one of the most common causes of homelessness for women and children⁽¹⁾. As a housing outreach worker, who works with women who have experienced domestic violence, I offer women resources for housing by making contact with building managers to find vacancies. Frequently, though, I talk to non-profit housing providers who tell me they have few or no vacancies available in the size unit I am asking them about. Many of the buildings have wait lists of 6 months to 2 years and some have lists that have not changed in length for at least that long. The B.C. Housing wait list is up to 2 years depending on the size of unit needed.

The vacancy rate in market housing is currently at 1.1% in B.C. and 0.9% in the Vancouver area, so finding affordable market suites is next to impossible for the women I work with⁽²⁾. A two bedroom suite rents for \$1000.00 per month or more. This is an average figure including suites available for \$650.00-\$800.00 a month in the basements of large houses where two or three tiny units per house have been marketed⁽³⁾. Often these suites are uncared for and not actually large enough for a family to live in.

Many women I work with must apply for money from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development

Homelessness and Violence Against Women



By Tamara

(formally the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance) because they have left their homes with nothing. They are then expected to find housing they can afford. With income assistance rates well under the poverty line, a two bedroom apartment in the lower mainland currently renting for upwards of \$1000.00 is out of reach.

It is unacceptable that the government of Canada has neglected to ensure the construction of low cost housing meets the demand. In 1982, Ottawa paid for the construction of 20 500 non-profit and co-op housing units; however, since then the need has grown but the number of suites built per year has significantly decreased. Incredibly, the federal government only paid for approx. 4, 500 social housing units to be built in 2006⁽³⁾.

Second Stage Transition House programs offer a real solution to the women who are fortunate to have the opportunity to stay in this stable housing environment for up to 2 years. More Second Stage programs are needed though, because there are not enough vacancies for the number of women who want to participate in the programs. The long wait a woman has to find housing once she leaves violence and comes into a transition house is an immense barrier for choosing not to return to her relationship if her option is homelessness once her stay in a transition house is over.

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WOMEN
making waves

Every woman and her children are entitled to safe, affordable and adequate housing. For the first time in almost three years the Honorable Monte Solberg, Federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development did meet with provincial housing ministers in April⁽⁴⁾; however, we have yet to see the results of the many promises made in the subsequent

press release. I have worked as a housing outreach worker for just over two years now, and in that time affordable housing wait lists have not decreased. Having a roof over one's head is not a privilege, it is a human right. Luck and timing seem to play a role in being able to find housing - A woman should not need luck to find a home!

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Homelessness is a Women's Issue

- Homelessness, for many women, is an initial solution to unsafe housing or homes. Women leave their homes because of physical and/or sexual violence.
- Women are often among the "invisible homeless", over-represented in shelters and transition houses.
- Shelters, safe houses, and transition houses turn away approximately 200 people a night

- On any given day there are approximately 40 families with children that are homeless
- One in five Canadian women lives in poverty totally 2.8 million women
- 56% of women headed families, 62% of immigrant women and 73% of Aboriginal single mothers live below the poverty line

Apology?

What did it mean to me?

By Fran Smith

BWSS Aboriginal
Women's STV
Counsellor



I am still amazed today as to how this apology from Stephen Harper and the Canadian Government impacted me. I went to the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre to listen along with many other First Nations people; when Stephen Harper began to speak and acknowledge the wrongs of Residential Schools, I began to cry; it was then that I realized that "Yes! The Government did need to acknowledge that what they did was wrong and I did need to hear it!"

I remember when I was a child, my grandmother and grandfather used to speak in our language, and I could understand them, but my grandmother wouldn't let me use it. She said that our language was wrong, that we wouldn't get anywhere in life with it and all that I needed to know was English. Today, I realize that she was wrong, that because I don't understand my language, a part of my culture is gone; I don't have this to pass on to my children or my grandchildren. They can say that they are Tsimshian, that part of their heritage is there, but they really don't know anything about it, the culture, tradition and language hasn't been passed on to them.

The apology was an awakening for me; I cried for two days and realized that I couldn't wait for someone else to do something about this, that I needed to be proactive in learning my language. Since the apology I have contacted a man from my territory who lives in Vancouver, he has agreed to teach us our language. I have talked to many Tsimshian people who live in Vancouver and they are definitely on board to learning our language; and a place has been secured for this to take place.

I am grateful for the apology, because it has given me even more motivation to move forward and embrace my culture, traditions, and language along with my children and their children; we are still here.

BWSS Aboriginal Women's Programs and Services

By Mona Woodward

BWSS First Nations Women's Support Worker/
Victim Service Worker

PM Apology to Indian Residential School Survivors

The Prime Minister of Canada made his public apology on June 11th 2008. BWSS Aboriginal staff attended with women survivors of the Indian Residential Schools at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center Society. This experience dredged up emotions that were painful and brought back memories for the survivors and their families.

As a victim support worker and a survivor myself I reflected on the prime minister's words where he stated "Trying to kill the Indian in the child," and the severity of those horrifying words. In an auditorium full of First Nations people who were 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation survivors there gasps, muffled cries, and some chose to run out of the room. The consensus was that an apology was too late and the damage was done. It was a positive gesture on the part of the government of Canada to acknowledge that injustices happened. It could serve as educational tool and reminder that these atrocities never happen again. However; it reminded me of the cycle of an abuser. The reality is that the oppression of the First Nations people in Canada still continues to happen. It will be interesting to see to how this apology will translate into more tax dollars for improved social conditions and services for the First Nations People of Canada.

Aboriginal Child Protection

Battered Women's Support Services & PIVOT Legal Society collaborated to hold a community information and discussion session on Aboriginal child protection services. Aboriginal child protection services have traditionally been the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). MCFD has been criticised for impacting Aboriginal children in a way that has been described as acting "an extension of the residential school system" (Reconciling Legal Traditions Conference March 2008). On April 1, 2008 responsibility for Aboriginal child protection was transferred from MCFD to designated Aboriginal authorities and in Vancouver that responsibility has handed off to Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society (VACFSS). Over 30 workers, counsellors and advocates were in attendance at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Center Society where they asked

questions about how this transfer will impact service delivery for Aboriginal children and their families.

Executive director Bernadette Spence provided an overview of the history, and services of VACFSS. Questions from the floor focused on how VACFSS will work toward reducing the numbers of Aboriginal children in care, housing options for children and their families, and the lack of support for women who have had their children apprehended. Bernadette Spence acknowledged the need for this service and that community services need to be involved for this important link for women. One the questions was; "How much clout does VACFSS have in securing a possible government grant for a mother support services after the apprehension? Answer: "It would be beneficial for VACFSS to support this." From this forum it outlined the work still to be done and VACFSS was open to the hope that we as community can work together to support families and children. We provided a comment sheet for Tom Christensen (the Minister of Child and Family Services), which a letter will be drafted from this event and forwarded to the minister. BWSS will work with other community organizations to enhance services for women after their children have been apprehended.



BWSS Empowering Women Through Arts & Culture

At BWSS we know that healing from violence and abuse involves not only talking such as counselling, but it is important through expression through body movement and art. This year we piloted Empowering Women Through Arts & Culture Support Group for women survivors of violence in all its forms.

Aboriginal People's Day was held on June 24th, 2008 and was an amazing journey that took BWSS staff and support group participants on a march from Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre down Commercial Drive and ending in the sunshine at Trout Lake. On that day, BWSS Empowering Women through Arts and Culture Support Group participants made their public debut.

The women created and performed a powerful performance grounded in the four sacred directions, where each participant represented her own unique culture on the medicine wheel. The four developments of a woman, child, youth, woman, elder, were highlighted through song, dance and words. Participants expressed the emotional fireworks and vibrant beauty in their performance. Some participants expressed that their performance helped to focus their own healing journey. It became clear to another participant that she is on a journey of rediscovery and that she gained a lot from the support and love she felt from participating in this group.



The day was overwhelmed with intensity and with the unity of the group. I could see tears of happiness not just in the women participating but in the audience and it was a positive experience.

NO RIGHT TO SAY

NO?



By R. At times I mourn my marriage, when I remember the good times. The longer I've been gone the more I realize how few the good times were. But they were real, and for that I miss him so much sometimes. It's the good times that make it so hard to move on.

We built a special bond every time we made love to each other. Every single time was a big event. I loved every minute of it, when we would make each other so happy. If sex could save a marriage then ours would have lived forever.

As it always happens, the fighting got worse and worse and I did not want to make love every time he wanted to. That's when he turned on me. I never thought I had the right to say no. I found out the hard way.

Now I look back and wonder to myself what might have been. If only he had treated me right. If only he had stopped calling me names. If only he had stopped kicking me. If only he had been nicer. If only he had been less angry, maybe we would have had a chance. If only.

**By Samantha
Kearney**

Sexual Violence

I know personally and in my work as a Stopping The Violence Counsellor at BWSS what sexual violence is all about. Many years ago I was raped by my then boyfriend. It was pretty clear to me and to others that it was rape – physical brutal force, bruises, extreme fear and survival behaviours were all involved. It is easier for many of us to name the extreme cases of sexual abuse as violence, as rape, as oppression because that is what is often portrayed around us – in the news, movies, books. However, sexual violence often involves very subtle and silent force. It happens daily in relationships and marriages. It happens daily in our justice system where women's characters are being questioned by police and lawyers in rape cases. It happens daily on our streets and on buses where men “innocently” rub up on women.

I hear from women all the time how their husbands, boyfriends, and partners quietly force them in sexual acts with strong underlining

messages such as, “If I'm not sexually satisfied...I'll leave...I'll find someone else...I won't let you see the children...I'll tell everyone how you're a horrible wife and mother”. These messages soon get internalized and begin to oppress women's sense of self, body, sexuality, power and rights. As I listen and witness the pain sexual violence and oppression causes women, I also hear and witness women's strength, resistance, and struggle in reclaiming their sense of self, sexuality, and bodies.

Last November, BWSS held an educational workshop on Sexual Health for women to better understand how living in a hierarchical and patriarchal society where violence and trauma is an everyday threat and reality for women impacts their sexuality and sexual health. In addition, to look at how women can reclaim and own their power over their own sexuality and being.

In Canada, it was only in 1983 that the Criminal Code dealing with rape was revised to include a number of additions one being that a husband can now be charged with sexually assaulting his wife. Originally the law saw rape as an offence against the property of men. Men who

raped had to pay compensation not to the woman, but to her father or husband for having “soiled his property” (The Canadian Woman's Legal Guide, 1988). The other revisions to the Criminal Code regarding rape cases were:

- rape was now referred to as sexual assault
- wider range of activities from sexual harassment to forced sexual intercourse were included
- penetration was abolished as a requirement for rape
- limiting the kind of questions defence lawyers could ask a woman regarding her previous sexual history
- victims could ask for a ban on the publication of her name and identity (The Canadian Women's Legal Guide, 1988)

BWSS is committed to helping women better understand and resist sexual oppression. Future workshops and support groups will be offered... stay tuned! Further information on the impact of sexual violence and on sexual healing can be found in such books as “*The Sexual Healing Journey*” by Wendy Maltz and “*The Courage to Heal Workbook*” by Laura Davis.

CRISIS!

BC's Child Welfare System & Violence Against Women

Child welfare system is hurting. Despite legislative reform, organizational restructuring, a couple of high profile reports/indictments, and changing governments this system continues to flail and fail children, their families and communities. In BC, one out of every five children lives below the poverty line. Over 9,271 children are living in foster care, more than half of whom are Aboriginal as reported in *Broken Promises Parents Speak about BC's Child Welfare System*, a 2008 report commissioned by PIVOT Legal Society.



Witnessing the abuse of their mothers is listed as one of the 23 risk factors and a child is considered to witness abuse when they have been present when the abuse occurred or knew indirectly that violence had occurred by overhearing a conversation, abusive incident or witnessing injuries. (*Broken Promises 2008*).

By Angela Marie
MacDougall

The report is an indictment of the provinces child welfare system. Surprisingly, the report highlighted that physical harm by a parent was only cited as a ground for removal in ten percent of child protection cases in the Lower Mainland while, sexual abuse or exploitation by a parent was cited as a reason for removal in less than one percent of cases. (*MCFD DESA branch 2005*)

Though all of the reports generated in recent years including the 1995 *Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection in British Columbia* evaluating the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) recommended preventative political will on the follow through...this has yet to be demonstrated. In the case of Aboriginal women, child welfare in BC continues to operate as a quasi extension of the residential school system (Reconciling Canadian & Indigenous Legal Traditions Conference March 2008) that dismantled Indigenous culture, family structures and where an entire generation of people have been denied parenting knowledge. (*Liberating Our Children 1992*)

Poverty, Addiction, Mental Health and Violence Against Women

Overwhelmingly the remaining 89% of removals of children were due to parent's challenges with poverty, addiction, mental health issues or violence against women in relationships all of which intersect in the lives of many women who access BWSS. According to research on child welfare investigations across Canada in 2003 children witnessing their mother's abuse was the second most commonly cited form of abuse or neglect, accounting for 28 percent of cases (*Statistics Canada 2006 Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*).

At Battered Women's Support Services, through our work, we have learned that abusers frequently use the children as a way to assert power and control over the woman. It is our assertion that if the children are within an earshot of the abuse they are being used, it is not uncommon for abusers to wake children up to bring them into the room to witness the abuse of their mother. After women have left an abusive relationship women are often forced to have contact with abusers through Family Court custody and access. Women are held responsible for their own abuse and for their children witnessing their abuse. Routinely the abuser is ignored by child welfare social workers.

Child protection best practices developed by MCFD for family violence cases in 2004 highlighted the importance of providing an integrated consistent support service and a commitment to providing supports to ensure that the non-abusing partner can keep the children in her care. At BWSS we see that these practices are not being followed and as one *Broken Promises* focus group participant said:

"There is no accountability on the Ministry's part to in fact demonstrate that they are, in any capacity, operating by the guiding principles. They are breaking their own law. Here are their operating guiding principles that they themselves are not even implementing. So what does that tell you about an existing organization that is managing the lives of these children?" (Broken Promises page 115)

What We Know

Battered women speak to us about their lives and we've learned that women stay in abusive relationships, then leave abusive relationships and then return to abusive relationships for complex reasons which include:

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A Sign of Things to Come?

In 2004, in New York State a class action lawsuit was filed on behalf of battered women and their children against child welfare agency in New York City. New York State's highest court ruled that New York City's child welfare service cannot take children into custody solely because they have witnessed violence against their mother. The trial court ruled that women victims of domestic violence and their children had been subjected to "widespread and unnecessary cruelty." Seven judges decided unanimously that witnessing violence does not mean that the child has been a victim of neglect and that children should be removed due to exposure to violence only in the rarest of circumstances and ordered and injunction to stop the practice.

Source: New York Times
December 18, 2004

- not recognizing what she is experiencing is abuse
- no information about available support or options
- fear of retaliation from abuser on her, children or her family
- the impact of abuse where her sense of right to autonomy does not exist
- shame, guilt, stigma for being abused in her relationship
- marriage vows, cultural expectations, religious considerations
- wanting to give the abuser a chance to change and believing she can improve the situation if she tries hard enough or loves enough
- social norms that reinforce that children need their father or a father figure
- love
- better to be with the devil you know than the devil you don't know

We have observed that removing children is often the first, not the last resort where the mother is the victim of abuse and has not directly harmed the child. Though the Ministry has developed a set of comprehensive protocols and practices for responding to violence against women in relationships they are not following their practices (*Broken Promises 2008*). We have learned that social workers do not have basic knowledge about the dynamics involved in abusive relationships and are often reluctant to provide adequate support for women attempting to leave abusive relationships.

This inaction appears to grow, in part, due to insufficient training in college and university programs, specialized knowledge such supporting immigrant women and families are optional in most college/university programs, child protection social workers tend to be fresh out of school with little to no relevant life or work experience and there seems to be a concern from social workers that women's advocates will not disclose child protection issues. Further, there appears to be a serious problem embedded in the organizational culture of the ministry that inhibits critical thinking, there appears to be an organizational culture of fear, there is a serious lack of support for social workers on the front line by the leadership at all levels. What we end up with are people with the very best intentions come to the ministry with a sincere desire to do good work and make change and end up disillusioned as they transform into social "police" who emphasize surveillance of families while practices the emphasize "help and service" erode... and social change is rarely if ever mentioned and never initiated.

A Critical Resource

At BWSS, though we are a resource for social workers when it has been identified that children are witnessing their mother's abuse and the woman is struggling with the impact of abuse social workers are often unaware of the resources available for women victims. Empowering Mother's Parenting Program, Healthy Relationships and

child minding services are programs BWSS has offered to women when child welfare issues have been identified. Additionally, BWSS provides individual counselling, support groups, crisis support and legal advocacy that help women on their journey to safety and empowerment.

We work collaboratively to ensure the safety of women and their children through community networks. In 2007, BWSS in collaboration with Family Services of Greater Vancouver, MCFD, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and Kiwassa Neighbourhood House held "Building a Safe Community Café". A cross sector event where over 100 participants engaged in dialogue about how community agencies can work with collaboratively to provide support to families when there is domestic violence. In 2008, BWSS partnered with PIVOT Legal Society to hold a Community Information and Discussion Session about Aboriginal child protection services in Vancouver. See *Mona Woodward Article in this issue of Women Making Waves*

Battered Women's Support Services continues to engage in systemic advocacy to:

1. ensure services are provided for the woman victim,
2. consider whether any other means other than child apprehension could eliminate the risks faced by the child(ren),
3. balance the risk against further trauma that apprehension might bring when determining which course of action is in the best interest of the child,
4. ask and listen to the woman victim about what she thinks is the best option for the safety for herself and her children,
5. address social problems at the root including reducing poverty through women's economic development initiatives and other universal public programs
6. recognize and redress the colonial legacy of BC and the implications on Aboriginal people
7. remove the lens of the dominant culture when working with immigrant women
8. work collaboratively with BWSS staff and other community organizations who are providing support to the woman and/or family
9. be transparent and accountable and earn the trust of women who have come to the attention of the child protection system

You tell us...

How can the Ministry of Child and Family Development child welfare system reverse the stagnancy and meet the needs of children and their families? email us at strategicinterventions@bwss.org

Responses will be printed in our next issue of Women Making Waves.

A Woman of Courage



Witnesses were called on to speak about Lydia's accomplishments, courage, determination, inspiration and to say thank you to her for "being the wind behind our backs"

In June 2008, Battered Women's Support Services was present when Lydia Cacho was honoured for her advocacy work at the annual *SFU Interfaith Summer Institute for Justice, Peace, and Social Movements*. This year titled *Valuing Human Dignity: Challenging the Trafficking of Women* organizers stated the goal to improve and build relationships between those who are opposed to the sexual exploitation of women during and after the Olympics; provide an analysis of trafficking and sex tourism that considers migration, displacement, labour issues and the impact on Indigenous and racialized women; and consider the contributions of spiritual and critical faith responses to the issue of trafficking.

The keynote speaker, Lydia Cacho, renowned journalist involved in fighting trafficking and sexual

exploitation of women and girls in Mexico, Lydia Cacho stands out because of her tenacity and bravery. Lydia Cacho is a professional journalist and writer in Mexico, as well as, a leading feminist and defender of human rights. She came to wide public attention in 2004 with the publication of her book, *The Demons of Eden: The Power Behind Child Pornography*, which documented her research into child pornography, sexual tourism and child prostitution in Cancun, Mexico.

She Named Names

The book included the names of powerful politicians and businessmen who are involved in the exploitation and abuse of minors. As a result, she was later kidnapped, tortured and jailed and although she took her case against her perpetrators as far as the

Supreme Court, harassment and intimidation against her continue to this day. However, her struggle for justice also continues at the national and international levels.

"It feels nice to walk around Vancouver not having my body guards and without worrying about being murdered" Lydia said in Spanish to Rosa Arteaga, BWSS Manager of Direct Services & Programs.

Blanket Ceremony

Lydia was honoured at the event in a traditional Snuneymuxw Coast Salish way through a Blanket Ceremony. Angela Marie MacDougall BWSS Executive Director was called as a witness remembers it this way. "Samaya Jardy, a member of Snuneymuxw First Nation on Vancouver Island spoke on behalf of the organizers and lead us through the ceremony. In front of an audience of approximately 70 and in a good way, Samaya spoke to us, reminding us that to honour Lydia was to honour ourselves, 'To honour one is to honour many'. A beautiful ceremony where a blanket was placed around her shoulders indicating that we lift her up in support. Witnesses were called on to speak about Lydia's accomplishments, courage, determination, inspiration and to say thank you to her for 'being the wind behind our backs'.

You tell us...

Share your thoughts about trafficking of women, email us at:

strategicinterventions@bwss.org

For more information about Lydia:
lydiacacho.net

Responses will be printed in our next issue of *Women Making Waves*.

bwss
BATTERED WOMEN'S
SUPPORT SERVICES

WOMEN
making waves

Battered Women's Support Services Endorses Downtown Eastside Women's Centre 2nd Annual March for Women's Housing & March Against Poverty



By Dynogri

Very few of us can remember how long Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) and Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) have been in partnership. The partnership has continued through time, politics and personalities to have emerged today dynamic and engaged sitting at the centre of what matters in the lives of all women. Support groups, outreach support, systemic advocacy, fundraising, solidarity organizing and the annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women represent the obvious collaborations.

DEWC (pronounced "duke") is leading the way in engaging women living in the Vancouver community notoriously known as the downtown eastside (DTES). Unique among downtown eastside service organizations, DEWC is focussed on the engagement of women to define and respond to their needs and concerns while securing connections and relationships beyond just providing services. Where the social issues of poverty, sexism, misogyny, racism and violence grind down every day in women's lives...the Power of Women Group speaks to the concerns and to social change while assisting women to find solutions to their individual and collective problems.

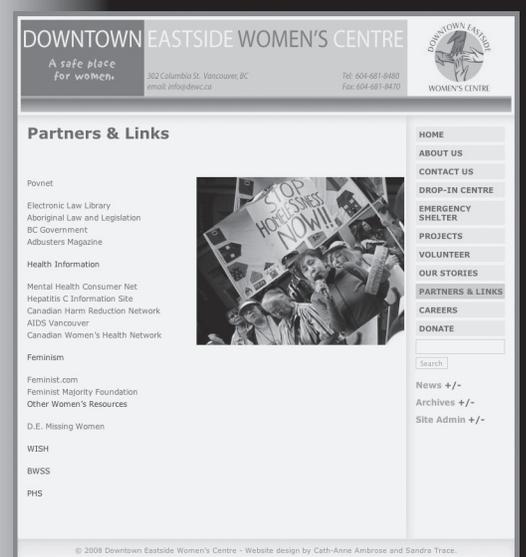
The 2nd Annual March for Women's Housing & March Against Poverty was organized by The Power of Women Group and was held on June 14th. The Power of Women Group has been very concerned about the lack of safe and affordable housing for women, the how the 2010 Olympics will impact women in terms of housing and trafficking of women. The Group has expressed their opposition to the development permit granted Concord Pacific Development and they are committed to holding the City of Vancouver City Council accountable to the DTES Housing Plan which requires a 1:1 replacement of any lost low-income housing units. The Group has determined that around 1000 units of low-income housing have been lost in the DTES since the Olympic bid due to closures, rent increases and they anticipate that 1500 new market housing units, primarily condos, are being built in the DTES. Which according to the City's own reports, market housing is currently being built at a rate of 3 units to every 1 unit of social housing in the DTES.

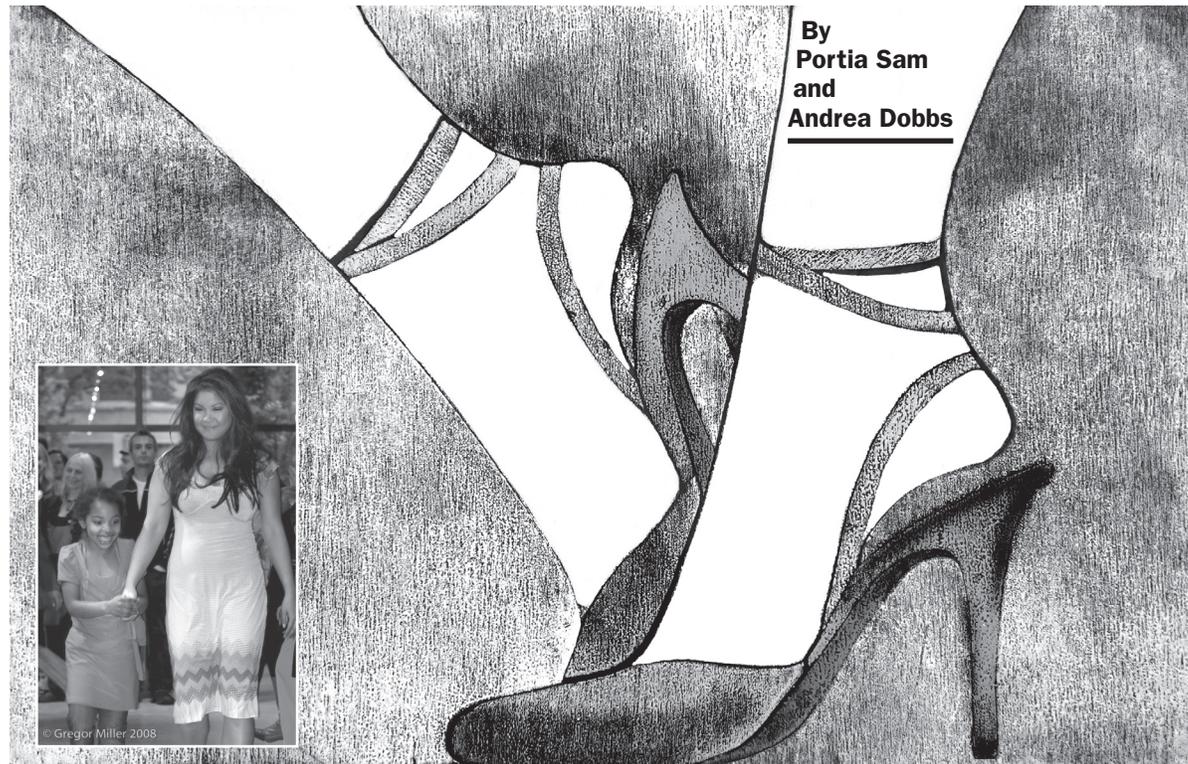
Up against power players like corporate developers and the City of Vancouver The Power of Women Group has a strong and clear voice as they continue to stand up and speak out for women in their community.

To learn more
about issues for
women in DTES
call DEWC at
778 885 0040
or 604-681-8480
or visit
www.dewc.ca

**Organized by
DEWC here is
what The Power
of Women Group
wants you to
know:**

The Power of Women Group is a group at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre and we do education on social issues. We are a group of women from all walks of life who are either on social assistance, working poor, or homeless; but we are all living in extreme poverty. Many of us are single mothers or have had our children apprehended due to poverty; most of us have chronic physical or mental health issues for example HIV and Hepatitis C; many have drug or alcohol addictions; and a majority have experienced and survived sexual violence and mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional abuse. For Indigenous women, we are affected by a legacy of the effects of residential schools and a history of colonization and racism.





By
Portia Sam
and
Andrea Dobbs

A Sweet Escape

Early June, our
retail program
MSC 1092
located at 1092
Seymour Street,
in Vancouver,
held the first
of many
Sweet Escape
events.

The evening was full of fashion, friends and fun. Over 40 people were present to support BWSS, engage in conversation, music, to participate in some friendly competition at the silent auction bidding table and share anticipation for the raffle prize of a trip for two to anywhere (*valued at \$1200*). Much appreciation to Suman Bakshi of YourTrips.ca for that generous donation.

Serious fashion was present thanks to local designers Miss Cara Milk of Sweet Soul (www.sweetsoul.biz), Ann Cockfield of Phresh Threads (phreshconcepts@gmail.com), and Caitlin Demill of Sweet Peony (www.sweetpeony.ca).

Real life runway models were also present and dressed to impress with spring themed dresses and mod inspired shifts and jackets, as well as, lovely short and jacket ensembles. All models volunteered their time and were either supplied by the designers or via our very own retail program volunteers friends and family! With support of the Shoppers Drug Mart Beauty Boutique our models were able to capture this season's hottest make up trends.

\$100 gift baskets from both Allison Eisler of Shoppers Drug Mart @ 1295 Seymour St. and Reno Consiglio of London Drugs @ 1187 Robson, as well as, a hand made jewellery set donated by Willo designs, all were greatly appreciated.

And we ate well...delicious tapas supplied by Rebecca Cook of the Edge Café @ 2450 Yukon St. and sweet tunes supplied by Kindred Antonick and sound system by Alexis Charles of Smooth Grooves (www.smoothgrooves.com).

Sweet Escape...women escaping violence and the sweetness one experiences in a life free of abuse. We look forward to celebrate many more Sweet Escapes in the future! We enjoyed the opportunity to network with our friends, neighbours and local business community members.... 'cause that is what we do empower women and strengthen communities.

**To learn more
about this event or to
support BWSS email
communications@bwss.org**

Special thanks:

- Martin Budny-Artist
- Brenn Kapitan
- Madeline Shaw from Lunapads.com
- Merritt of The Canadian Flowers for Food Society
- Cliff Wiles of Costco
- Cassandra Anderton of Suma Ridge Estate Winery
- Zachery Longboy of Capers Whole Foods
- Westcoast Hot Yoga
- Alexis Palkowski
- Anne Dunnett
- Everyday HAIKU
- Ted Loo Fitness
- Loir Ann
- NK Mip Callaes
- Nancy Lee



Engaging Immigrant Women Anti-Violence Workers • BWSS been building relationships with immigrant women service providers through individual and group meetings. BWSS hosted three brainstorming sessions with women anti violence workers who work with immigrant women from Persian, South Asian and Latin American communities. Through this process BWSS has connected with over 60 women workers representing over 30 organizations to discuss cultural and community issues for immigrant women who experience violence. Funded by The Law Foundation of BC engaging immigrant women anti-violence workers is part of a larger law reform project of immigrant women engagement. See www.bwss.org

www.bwss.org & The Resource Manual for the report and recommendations from these events. And stay tuned for more Immigrant Women Anti-Violence Worker activities



Elders Council – Elders Speak • BWSS hosted two talking circles honouring and recognizing Women Elders from diverse community, cultural and ethnic groups. Around 50 women including several young women from a local youth shelter met to discuss violence against women from a generational perspective. Elders shared their personal experiences of violence, experiences organizing women in their communities against violence and oppression, stories of survival, message for younger women and message for Battered Women's Support Services. Urban Native Youth

Association, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, Women Against Violence Against Women, Inner City Women's Initiative & The Centre were all represented. See www.bwss.org for the report, pictures and recommendations from these events. And stay tuned for more Elder engagement in BWSS programming



Violence Prevention Project • BWSS has expanded our young women programming and our violence prevention education in schools and communities. Young women survivors of violence continue to access BWSS crisis and long term counselling services and BWSS has dedicated staff to respond to young women and their unique needs. BWSS will continue Violence Prevention Education

activities in the public and private school systems, as well as, continue youth engagement in violence prevention through numerous initiatives planned in the next year.



LGBTTSQ Accessibility and Violence Intervention Project is underdevelopment. We provide services for all self-identified women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and two spirit women. Despite its absence in common media and anti-violence information, same-sex/ same-gender abuse is widespread and prevalent. BWSS is committed to facing that reality and providing relevant services and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and two spirit women. We have formed an LGBTTSQ Accessibility Committee in house and will engage the community

Community Engagement Activities

to respond to accessibility and service provision through networking and training.

vehicle to transport our staff, merchandise and materials throughout the lower mainland and other places in the province.

training workshops. Based on an empowerment model our curriculum is grounded in theoretical foundations, current research, practical experience and is designed to enhance and develop awareness, knowledge and skills of participants. Our trainers are on the cutting edge of analysis and service provision, each with years of experience and knowledge, each committed to social change through education.

Please look at our upcoming Training Workshops on next page



BWSS Van is on the road. With funding from Central City Foundation, BWSS Retail, Outreach and Education programs will now have access to a

Training Initiatives

• Since 1979 BWSS has had a mandate in adult education, developed curriculum and delivered

Coming
Soon

www.bwss.org a re-conception of our website designed to engage the world to end violence against women

Available
Now

Indian Residential Schools
Options for Aboriginal Women Survivors, an Aboriginal Woman centered pamphlet for women survivors of residential schools to get your copy email strategicinterventions@bwss.org

**BATTERED WOMEN'S
SUPPORT SERVICES**

upcoming *training workshops*

1. **Empowering Women and Supporting Change using Motivational Interviewing**
 - the next wave of supporting women survivors of violence in intimate relationships by working directly with the themes of ambivalence so much at the heart of women's journey.
2. **Doing Justice: Honouring Our Resistance in work against violence** ... this workshop takes Vicarious Trauma theory to the next level and all the way back home
3. **Trauma and Resistance: Therapeutic Witnessing with people who have experienced violence ...** this workshop evolves trauma theory to the next phase situating trauma and the strategies of resistance
4. **BWSS Violence Prevention & Intervention Training Program** • a 96 hour training program held twice yearly... the BWSS standard where participants receive the latest information while learning skills all grounded in analysis and knowledge informed by the leaders in anti-violence and feminist thought.
5. **LGBTTSQ Accessibility and Intervention Project** • will host several events over the next year designed to increase accessibility & strengthen interventions for supporting women survivors of same sex/gender violence
6. **The Training Program: Refugee & Immigrant Women Who Experience Violence** • a women-centred approach for managing the spectrum of needs from settlement to empowerment (in partnership with The People's Law School) is a training program for frontline workers and/or immigrant serving organizations
7. **The Resource Manual: Refugee & Immigrant Women Who Experience Violence** • toolkit for frontline workers in anti-violence and/or immigrant serving organizations a women-centred approach for managing the spectrum of needs from settlement to empowerment
8. **Empowering Women Survivors of Violence** • Core Training commencing January 2009 assessment, ethics, crisis, counselling skills as well as violence dynamics, trauma and the healing path, substance use and women, mental health issues and women, specialized support strategies and analysis to support Aboriginal women, immigrant women, as well as legal issues and advocacy skills.
9. **Child Welfare & Violence Against Women**
 - information about child protection system, how it intersects with violence against women for frontline workers to develop their knowledge and skills to provide support to and advocate for women presented by advocates and lawyers this workshop will raise consciousness and fine tune support strategies.
10. **Legal Advocacy Workshops** • lawyers & advocates present on specific areas of law that are most relevant to women and front line workers
11. **Women's Leadership & Training Initiative**
 - working with rural women in northwest BC from an empowerment model to provide training leadership and delivering training sessions to frontline workers who are working with women survivors... including week long sessions with students in mining camps in northern BC

For more information about training offered by BWSS or to request specialized training email strategicinterventions@bwss.org or see our website at www.bwss.org

**How Bwss
Training Initiatives
Are Changing
The World...**

“BWSS training gave me the opportunity to question my beliefs, gave me the tools to help women survivors of violence and gave me solid confidence. It is fair to say that BWSS has positively affected almost every aspect of my life”

“When I came to the training I really did not expect it to make such impact on me. Coming from a Central American country where many people seemed to view the physical abuse of women, children and animals

as nothing out of the ordinary, I assumed that I would not hear anything new. In retrospect, I am embarrassed by my arrogance. Before coming to Battered Women’s Support Services I also blamed the victims of abuse. I simply did not fully understand why they did not simply leave an abusive relationship. Training in fact made me aware of the extent to which I had unconsciously accepted prejudices against abused women. By providing me with information on the situations that these women found themselves in, I believe that I now have a better appreciation of the challenges that they face”

“From the moment you walk in the door you know you are a special place. I have a masters degree in counselling psychology and the analysis and skills I

learned at BWSS training were unique and unprecedented in all my previous studies. I am amazed that I could not get that what I received at BWSS in formal academic settings”

“The main tool we learned to use in the training is the law. I have been educated in Canada but astonishingly, didn’t have a very good understanding of the laws of my own country. Through the training I came to understand for the first time what the Charter of Rights is and how to use it. I learned that rights have to be fought for and defended, they don’t just “exist”. That the voices of those with less power have to be supported and strengthened and that as women’s victim support workers we have to know the law and work within that framework with skill and deftness”

**What Women Are
Saying About The
Healing Journey**

“I am seeking to create a brand new me out of the old me...have new rules to cope and live by that are healthier...in the mist of it all, feeling more comfort within myself and starting to have a desire to explore. First time in years I want and am willing to go with my desires and test them out”.

“I am now in a good place and am grateful for that. It is the first time I feel at home and connected to this place... and connected with myself. When I was married I did not recognize myself when I looked in the mirror. Now when I look in the mirror, I see me. I now feel that I am on the other side of the mountain”.

*To all the women
at BWSS,*

I work at a transition house in a rural community where I regularly read your newsletter. I just wanted to thank you for all of the work that you do. It’s inspiring for me to hear about your work and new programs, I feel connected and inspired through your newsletter. I was brought to tears when I read your stats from the last year; I am so grateful that you were able to support so many women.

I’m so impressed with the work BWSS is doing, from reading the latest newsletter

Our agency subscribes to Women Making Waves. It is one of the many tools that help me to sustain the big picture in a rural and remote community. All the best...

**What People Are
Saying About Women
Making Waves**

As an everyday person living in the suburbs I don’t have access to information about “the real issues” I look forward to receiving my copy of Women Making Waves.

I am so happy to be able to write for the newsletter as a woman who is healing from abuse and violence

It is an excellent resource and always creatively engaging my interest in your agency’s diverse educational approaches. Very real and assertive with what needs to be said, in my opinion. Keep up the excellent work.

WOMEN *making waves*

Women Making Waves is published by **Battered Women's Support Services**

Women's Support Services, a non-profit organization supporting women facing abuse and violence.

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...
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...
Editors:
BWSS Staff and Volunteers

yes! I would like to support BWSS in your work to end violence against women.

I would like to donate \$ immediately to BWSS.

Monthly Sustaining Member

I wish to join the *Circle of Strength* monthly giving club and make my gift of \$ every month.

I authorize BWSS to bill my credit card on the 1st of each month. I understand that I may cancel my contribution at any time with written notice.

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Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2 **Online** www.bwss.org

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10 Things MEN CAN DO

To Prevent Violence Against Women

- 1. It's A Men's Issue** - Think of violence against women as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers
- 2. Don't Remain Silent, if a brother, friend, classmate, co-worker is abusive to a woman or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general** - don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor, or a counselor.
- 3. Have Courage** - to look inward. Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.
- 4. Offer Support** - If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted offer support, refer to BWSS How To Help My Friend for ideas
- 5. Stop & Get Help Now** - If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive to women, or have been in the past, stop & seek professional help NOW.
- 6. Donate to Battered Women's Support Services** - Join us in our work to end all forms of all forms of violence against women. Attend our events, rallies and other public events. Raise money for us so that we can continue our prevention and intervention work.
- 7. Say No to Homophobia and Gay-Bashing** - Discrimination and violence against lesbians and gays are wrong in and of themselves. This abuse also has direct links to sexism (eg. the sexual orientation of men who speak out against sexism is often questioned, a conscious or unconscious strategy intended to silence them. This is a key reason few men do so).
- 8. Educate Yourself** - Attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about multicultural masculinities, gender inequality, and the root causes of violence against women. Educate yourself and others about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between individual men and women. See www.bwss.org
- 9. Stop Buying Sexism and Misogyny** - Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any Web site, or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.
- 10. Take Leadership** - Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with violence against women prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example

Adapted from the work Jackson Katz. www.jacksonkatz.com

Ministry of
Housing and Social
Development.
Ministry of Public
Safety & Solicitor
General Victim
Services Division.



Funding Partners:

