

priorities

THE FEMINIST

VOICE IN A SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 3

PRICE: \$1.50

FALL 1992

focus

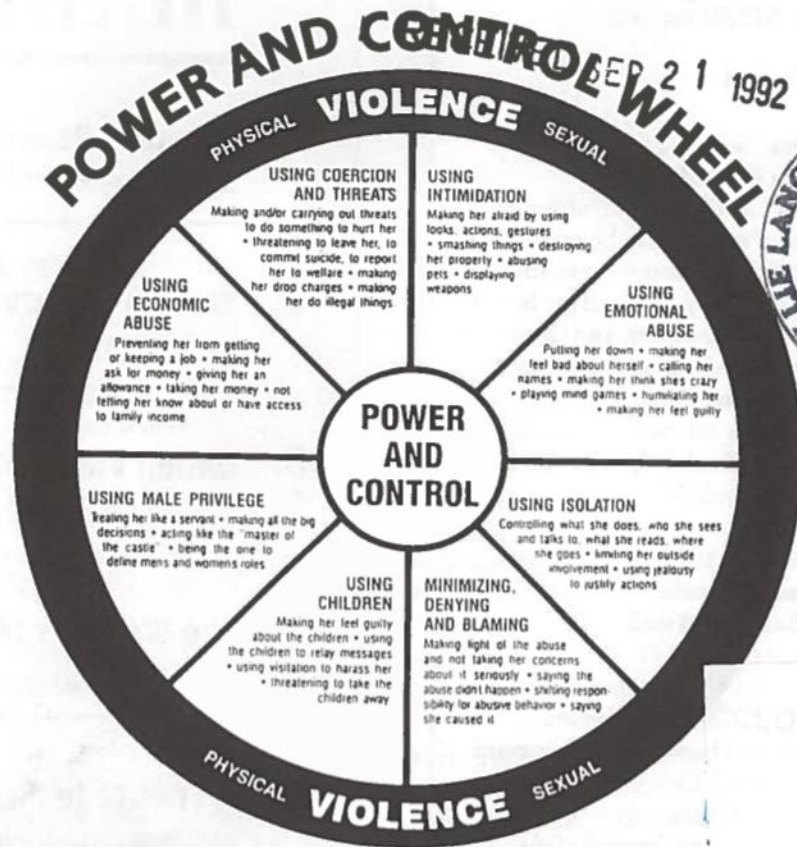


VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Violence in the Workplace
- Dating Violence
- The Women's Monument Project

also inside

- A Tribute to Pauline Jewett
- Planning Ourselves In



PROGRESS REPORT ISSUES CHALLENGES FOR ACTION

by CHARLEY BERESFORD

The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women released its interim report in mid-August. The panel has released what it terms immediate challenges for action in this report, while reserving other recommendations to end violence against women as they

relate to the public and private sectors of Canadian society in its final report.

The immediate challenges for action are as follows:

1. Northern communities and especially the Inuit women who live there, must have financial resources immediately to assist with the development of intervention models to stop violence against

women and the violence perpetrated by men against members of their families.

2. There must be immediate counselling intervention for children who are abused or who witness abuse to break potential cycles of violence as early as possible.

3. Transition houses, sexual assault centres, women's centres and see **CHALLENGES** page 10

priorities is published by the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the British Columbia New Democratic Party.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Individual: \$10.00 per year
Institution: \$15.00 per year

ISSN 0700-6543

priorities welcomes letters and articles from its readers. All submissions must be signed, although publication of names may be withheld on request. The Editors reserve the right to edit all copy received in the interest of brevity, clarity, and taste. Submissions should be typed, triple spaced, if possible.

Submissions and subscriptions should be mailed to:

priorities
c/o B.C. NDP
3110 Boundary Road
Burnaby, B. C. V5M 4A2

"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist movement. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the Women's Liberation Movement and commits an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

— NDP Policy on Women's Rights

The Editors are responsible for the content of all unsigned material.

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priorities is designed and produced by Angela Kenyon

Printed in a union shop:

Press Gang Printers 

priorities

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WOMEN AS TARGETS FOR WORKSITE VIOLENCE

Physical acts are not the only type of workplace violence that women employees face. Mental violence is also endemic to institutions, hospitals and other facilities.

by **CAROL ADAMS**

Once, as a junior reporter in Squamish, I wrote an article detailing how bikers were using kittens to train their pitbulls to kill. The day after going to press, I was confronted in my office by three leather-clad and tattooed, hulking club members, screaming and threatening. On another occasion, I was threatened physical harm after filing a story about a local man charged with wife assault. The RCMP were called to intercept the man who claimed he was "on his way over to get me." In a third incident, my publisher, also a woman, was greeted at the front counter by a man sporting a sawed-off shotgun.

I was lucky. These were verbal threats only. But the potential for more than just verbal abuse leaves me — and countless women workers — at extreme risk. For us, violence in the workplace is an everyday reality.

Worksite violence is a known complaint amongst women members of the B.C.

Government Employees' Union (BCGEU) who comprise 58 per cent of the membership. Women in the BCGEU work at the most commonly listed sites where violence against women is recurrent: hospitals, jails, psychiatric institutions, welfare and social services offices, geriatric units, motor vehicle branches, liquor stores and retail outlets (ie, Army and Navy stores).

Over the years, BCGEU women — from health care workers and kitchen staff to social workers and guards — have reported incidents of threats (both verbal and physical), kicking, punching, spitting, biting, strangulation, sexual and other harassment.

Linsey Buss, chairperson of the union's Hospital and Allied Services Component and a psychiatric aide at Woodlands institution, recalls being kicked in the stomach by a patient until she bled internally. Darlene Thorburn, a health care aide who works with elderly patients, remembers an incident where a client flung his cane at one of the nurses, breaking her leg.

Thorburn, who also

chairs the union's Health and Care Component, says violent incidents of this nature are "happening all the time, all over the place." But she adds physical acts are not the only type of workplace violence that women employees face. Mental violence is also endemic to institutions, hospitals and other facilities. Thorburn recounts the stress and anguish of workers during a debriefing session after an elderly patient hung himself in his room.

Workplace violence is also frequently cited by another BCGEU component chairperson, Wendi Lawrence. Lawrence, a supervisor in the Ministry of Social Services who works in a downtown Vancouver office, recites incident after incident of verbal, physical and mental abuse of women employees.

"We are constantly being spit at, sworn at, hit with pens and any other objects our clients can get their hands on," Lawrence says.

"In one incident, a guy came in with a baseball bat and whacked the front counter in half. We've had

clients take chairs and smash the windows. A woman employee was kicked so hard her ribs were broken. Another time, a guy threw a brick through the office window, showering a woman employee with glass. Myself, I've had a guy come at me with a steel pipe."

Lawrence says that with one in 10 people on welfare in B.C., the downsizing of psychiatric institutions like Riverview resulting in more and more people with mental disorders on the streets, and inadequate social services, people are frustrated and are lashing out at employees.

"They just explode," she says.

Just this past month, an inmate at the Fraser Regional Correctional Centre claiming to be HIV-positive spat on nurses at Maple Ridge Hospital where he was being treated for epileptic seizures, and bit

the attending correctional officer, a BCGEU member. "How does it feel to have AIDS?", the inmate taunted.

In a submission to the Workers' Compensation Board's Regulation Advisory Committee, George Hayman, BCGEU vice-president, said "for many workers who deal with the public, with clients or with institutionalized residents, patients or inmates, the threat of pent-up anger and frustration turning into aggressive, abusive or violent behaviour is an everyday reality.

"This reality for correctional, health care, psychiatric long term care, social service, retail and other workers has been downplayed or termed 'unpredictable risk' for too long.

"Our members report being threatened verbally and with weapons, hit, spat on, having furniture thrown

at them and countless other forms of assault, both physical and psychological."

Mary Rowles and Deborah Prieur, in their newly released booklet, *Taking Action: A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women*, suggest that women in service are being attacked simply because they are women. Darlene Thorburn agrees. "If you're a male orderly, a patient is less likely to take a swing at you."

The authors further point out that management attitudes precipitate the notion that such violence goes with the job.

"Even more disturbing is the reality that managers, supervisors and other workers in positions of authority, such as doctors, accept no responsibility for preventing or even intervening in a violent attack on a woman worker," Rowles and Prieur note.

Says Wendi Lawrence: "Management's attitude is 'you knew what you were getting into when you took the job' and 'if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen'. It's a real problem."

Young women, women of colour, immigrant women and First Nations women are particularly susceptible to workplace violence where racial and sexual harassment underline the provocation. And for women in jobs not adequately covered by employment standards legislation (ie, domestic and farm workers) or collective agreements, their cries go unheard.

In Canada, health and safety regulations dictate that employers must provide safe workplaces for employees. But regulations are only



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as good as the extent to which they are challenged, updated and above all, enforced. The labour movement — both in the public and private sector — has repeatedly called attention to the need for stricter measures to reduce the risk of employees, particularly women, on the job.

To combat the increasing incidence of workplace violence, the BCGEU is calling for the following measures:

- training in recognizing and managing such critical situations and violent or abusive persons
- the installation of physical safeguards and modifications of equipment, furniture, etc, appropriate to the work situation
- check procedures adequate to ensure the safety of workers who may be exposed to critical incidents
- the provision of available pertinent information regarding a client's, resident's or inmate's history of capacity for physical or verbal violence
- adequate provision for direct personal exchange relevant to safety between incoming and outgoing shifts
- adequate staffing ratios to minimize risk and provide assistance
- provision of post-traumatic counselling and debriefing to workers affected by a critical incident (without loss of pay).☐

CAROL ADAMS is a Communications Officer with the BCGEU and a member of the NDP's Women's Rights Committee.

DATING VIOLENCE

by JESSICA BOWERING

“Actually the physical and emotional abuse started right after we first made love. He was nice and sweet until he had secured me as his girlfriend.”

The sad truth of many romances is that they often mean women are raped, punched, insulted or demeaned by their boyfriends.

Dating violence extends to all sectors of society and can be a part of what seems to be the most perfect relationship. Sometimes it happens on a first date with a person the woman has only trusted this one time; other times it becomes a long term pattern of abuse throughout a relationship. In many cases the abuse doesn't start until the woman no longer feels she has the power to leave the relationship.

The violence ranges from the physical and sexual abuse that many women fear the most, to more insidious emotional abuse. This is the kind of thing that makes it so difficult for women to get out and get help. They have become isolated from the support system of family and friends, they have been made to feel that abuse is their fault or they view their boyfriends' lack of control as a symbol of how much they love them. They love “the half of him that doesn't hit them”. A relationship where one partner has more control than the other is a very violent relationship even if physical violence is not involved.

“In the beginning he phoned me almost 10 times a day. I felt really special, but then he started harassing me about how I should do things, like what I should wear, how I should act. He started saying things about my friends, who I should see and where I should go. For a long time I thought his jealousy meant he loved me.”

The prevalence of violence in young people's relationships is difficult to judge because it is seldom talked about and it is even rarer for an instance to be reported - at least not until serious physical or emotional damage has been done. This is a result of the pressure that society inflicts on young women to have boyfriends and to make a relationship work. Unfair as it is, many women feel that it is their “job” to maintain their relationships which means that they try to change their own behaviour to pacify their boyfriends. Low self-esteem is a chronic problem for young women and young women convinced that they “deserve” to be abused are unlikely to leave or to report the abuse.

“I never talked to any of my friends, because of the beginning when they told me not to get involved. I never wanted to admit how ungreat the relationship actually was.”

For young women to protect themselves from dating violence they need to believe in their own strength as individuals. They are valuable human beings in and out of relationships and any time a relationship isn't equally good for both partners they have the option of leaving. The scary myth that excessive jealousy and forced intimacy are signs of love and desire, need to be dispelled in the minds of young women. Women don't stay in these types of relationships because they like being abused but because they don't feel able to get out. No one ever deserves to be treated with the kind of contempt that dating violence shows and the best thing that can be done is for the victims to get out and talk about their experiences and for others to provide support and understanding for these victims instead of blaming them for their problems as has so often happened in the past.☐

JESSICA BOWERING is Women's Coordinator for the YND.

THE WOMEN'S MONUMENT PROJECT



In memory, and in grief for all women murdered by men. For women of all countries, all classes, all ages, all colours. We their sisters and brothers, remember, and work for a better world.

by **DIANE DUPUIS**

Those words will appear on a monument dedicated to all women murdered by men. The idea for a women's monument came from the Capilano College Women's Centre and was inspired by the Dec. 6, 1989 Montreal Massacre. The names of the fourteen women killed in Montreal will also be inscribed on the monument.

Women have turned a corner in the issue of violence against women. The Women's Monument Project (WMP) is a genuine grassroots response to the crisis of violence against women. The monument is a remembrance to women who were breaking new ground in a non-traditional field and women will be working on all aspects of the project from conception through construction. The finished work will be an original, feminist design that will be completely dif-

ferent from what people have seen in the past. The monument design will be selected through a national competition opened to all women attending a post-secondary institution; designs can be submitted on an individual or group project basis. The competition process will provide women with an experience they wouldn't normally have. The design competition will be juried by a panel of distinguished women professionals.

The WMP Committee includes women representing a wide variety of experiences; including members of the Capilano College Women's Centre, an instructor from Emily Carr and two single mothers among others. Cate Jones has been hired to coordinate the fundraising. The project has an estimated budget of \$300,000. Says Jones, "we hope to target non-traditional sources to raise funds." Traditional sources

of funding include governments, foundations and individuals who normally donate to women's issues. Non-traditional sources, such as large corporations that employ a lot of women, manufacturers of women's hygiene products, individuals who don't normally give to women's issues and engineering, architectural, educational and professional associations are being targeted. Capilano College has donated office space. Endorsements, from all parts of the country, have been arriving on a regular basis.

Negotiations with Vancouver City Council and the Vancouver Parks Board are underway to determine the eventual site. The organizers are hoping the site will be donated by the municipal government. First Nations support for the site is also important since the site could be part of a potential land claim. The site has to be a public space that is both safe (for

people and the monument) and accessible. The organizers want the monument to be an interactive and contemplative place for people to mourn and remember all victims of male violence. A slate will be available for women to express their feelings in writing. Jones says, "there isn't any place in the city where women can meet for our events." The monument can become the rallying place where women can gather for events such as International Women's Day, vigils and Take Back the Night.

The monument is a positive response to heinous and disgusting behaviour and will serve as both a place for reflection and contemplation while simultaneously forcing men to confront their violent tendencies. It is also a way for the arts community to directly affect social change through their art. Women have few historical markers. This monument is a physi-

cal and tangible representation that has traditionally been the domain of men. There was little coverage from the mainstream press when the Women's Monument Project was announced. Ironically, the white ribbon campaign, which was initiated by men received widespread coverage throughout the country. This emphasizes the inequalities faced by women in our society — something initiated by men is given more importance than an act that is woman focused and initiated.

Tax receiptable donations can be made to:
The Women's Monument Project
 c/o The Comptroller
 Capilano College
 2055 Purcell Way
 North Vancouver, B.C.
 V7J 3H5Q

DIANE DUPUIS is Co-Editor of **priorities** and a member of the NDP Women's Rights Committee.

WMP SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

As of July 1992, the following organizations had either sent donations or letters of support to the Women's Monument Project.

- Battered Women's Support Services
- Women Counselling Services of Vancouver
- TRI Counselling Services
- B. C. Federation of Labour Women's Committee
- South Surrey/White Rock Women's Place
- B. C. Coalition for Abortion Clinics
- NDP Women's Rights Committee
- Mature Women's Support Group
- West Coast Women and Words Society
- Trent University Women's Centre
- Medicine Hat Student Association
- Medicine Hat College
- Grande Prairie Regional College
- Association Des Etudiante(s) Francophones, Universite Laurentienne
- Hay River Women's Centre
- Simon Fraser Student Society
- Office and Technical Workers Union Local 378 Q

A TRIBUTE TO PAULINE JEWETT 1922-1992

by MARGARET MITCHELL

On Dec. 11, 1922 Pauline Jewett was born in St. Catherines, Ontario where she grew up. She was an outstanding student and academic and trail blazer for women. After graduating from Queen's University, she attended Harvard, where she was the only woman in her doctoral program. She went on to post-doctoral work at the London School of Economics.

In 1955, Pauline was the first woman appointed to the faculty of Political Science at Carleton

University and she became the head of that department in 1960. Her cottage on Constance Lake on land owned cooperatively with Carleton colleagues, was her summer home and family gathering place since 1957.

Pauline was the founding president of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and she continued to work for the advancement of women throughout her academic and political careers. She was a Director of the Carleton Institute for Canadian Studies and Vice-Chair of the Committee for an independent Canada.

Pauline was always attracted to politics. In 1961 and 1963 she ran for the Liberals and represented the riding of Northumberland, Ontario from 1963 to 1965. She opposed the Liberal government War Measures Act, left the Liberals and ran unsuccessfully for the New Democratic Party in 1972.

Pauline moved to British Columbia in 1974 to become President of Simon Fraser University. As the first woman to hold the office of President of a major university, she established a child care centre, a women's studies program

and took action to remove wage disparities for women workers. She also resolved past disputes and hired more Canadian faculty members.

She once again became interested in politics and won the seat of New Westminster-Coquitlam in 1979. She represented that riding for the New Democratic Party until her retirement in 1988.

As the New Democrats' critic for the Status of Women, Pauline advocated equal pay for work of equal value and affirmative action; she worked constantly to encourage participation of women in politics. She worked with the women's movement in 1982 to negotiate Sections 15 and 28 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and was vocal in the constitutional debate.

As External Affairs Critic, Pauline worked with women for peace and disarmament and promoted programs for women in development. She advocated Canada's withdrawal from NATO and NORAD and was a vocal opponent of cruise missile testing.

After retiring from Parliament in 1988, Pauline was appointed Chancellor of Carleton University where she remained until her passing.

Throughout her life, Pauline Jewett contributed her intelligence, her expert knowledge, her warm humanity, her courage and tenacious determination to help build a more progressive and independent Canada and a more peaceful world for everyone.

She will be missed. □



by MELODIE CORRIGAL

At a memorial brunch at the Waterstreet Cafe Judy Patterson's friends expressed their love and respect for Judy and her companion Gail Meredith who demonstrated such courage and devotion during Judy's long illness.

Gail led off with a story of Judy taking on the drain pipes from their house to the road which ended with a bigger splash than she'd expected. Typically Judy had seen a job that had to be done and rolled up her sleeves.

Cynthia Flood, who worked with Judy in the early days of *Priorities* and the Women's Rights Committee, expressed our surprise at how much Judy had accomplished in her few active years: in the women's committee, the NDP and the union movement.

Judy's aunt, Edith Thomas, whom she'd recruited to the Women's Committee, noted that even as a child Judy was undaunted by challenges. Growing up in a union family, from her earliest years, Judy acted, instead of talking, when change was required.

Margaret Beardsley recalled Judy's "strength, cheerfulness and laughter which carried her through the difficulties she faced as Chair of the Women's Rights Committee when we were still struggling to establish the importance of women's rights in the NDP."

Sharon Yandle reminded us that, though optimistic, Judy felt anger at the injustices particularly those faced

SOMEONE WE WERE GLAD TO STAND BESIDE

JUDY PATTERSON 1952-1992



"Any coward can fight a battle when she's sure of winning, but give me a woman who has pluck enough to fight when she's sure of losing. That's my way. There are many victories worse than defeat."

— *George Eliot*

by women. While Rosemary Joy of Victoria recalled how, as Women's Organizer, Judy travelled throughout B.C. reaching out to NDP women activists.

Like many of us, Shelia Gilhooley was touched by the dedication and love Gail

had shown Judy during her long illness. As Judy's partner, Gail had to fight for the rights other couples take for granted.

Muggs Sigurgrdson's memories says it all: Even though I knew Judy in the NDP in the 1970's, when

we worked together in Vancouver South and the Vancouver Area Council, my most vivid memories of her are from our days together in SORWUC. In 1978, when some staff from the Muckamuck Restaurant walked into the SORWUC office "looking for a union" Judy and Gail responded immediately. For the next few months, Judy worked with others to organize the unit, doing the ticklish work of applying for certification, dealing with suspensions, reprimands and firings and ultimately, a strike that lasted two and a half years.

The early days of the Muckamuck unit were critical and exhausting. The owner was a rich white man who lived in the U. S., the staff were native and young. A few staff jumped to the other side and scabbed. Tensions were high and there was a lot of name calling aimed at the union.

In the end, we made it clear that the restaurant wouldn't operate non-union, so it closed. It is now the Quillicum, owned and operated by native people. One of the reasons we were able to prevail was the solid ground work done by Judy and others in the early months.

My last work with Judy was in Women Against the Budget, Judy and I did security at the Stone Soup Luncheon held in front of Grace McCarthy's house. What a great day that was! Judy was someone you were glad to stand beside. She could always be counted on to be still hanging in there when it was all over. I am glad that I had those years of knowing Judy."

And, so are we all! ☺

PLANNING OURSELVES IN Women and the community planning process

by MERRILEE ROBSON

A recent Gallup poll indicated that 56 per cent of women felt unsafe walking along a familiar street at night. Only 18 per cent of the men felt uneasy in their own community but many women have legitimate fears about their personal safety. To respond to those fears, a group of women planners is working on a project designed to involve women in the community planning process.

Lack of affordable housing and poor transit links between home, work, childcare and other services are just two of the things that make our communities difficult places for women to live. The seven women planners who formed the steering committee for the project found that women's needs were rarely identified or considered legitimate during the community planning process. The project aims to provide concrete examples of how planning would be different if it was sensitive to women's concerns.

The steering committee plans to work with community-based women's groups to identify planning issues. A series of workshops will look at barriers in the existing planning process, focus on issues that were not considered in that process and identify ways that women can participate more effectively in the process. The work will result in materials that can be used in gender sensitive planning.

The group has already received financial support from the Planning Institute of B. C., and is seeking funding from other sources. ☐

MERRILEE ROBSON is Co-Editor of **priorities** and a member of the NDP's Women's Rights Committee.

in upcoming issues

Volume 20, Number 4 — Winter 1992

priorities RETROSPECTIVE

priorities is 20 years old this year. Share your memories of the past 20 years of the women's movement. Deadline for submissions: November 13, 1992
Mail submissions to:

priorities, c/o B.C. New Democratic Party
3110 Boundary Road, Burnaby, B.C. V5M 4A2
or Fax 432-9517

CHALLENGES from page 1

national women's organizations need immediate permanent and adequate funding.

4. Resources must be provided to women who are at present leaving high-risk situations of abuse.

5. There must be construction of places safe from violence for Aboriginal women and children, staffed by trained personnel and backed up by permanent and adequate funding.

6. Immediate action must be taken by the justice system to ensure consistency in treating violence against women as a serious crime as evidenced through the laying of charges and sentencing.

7. There must be mandatory violence prevention education of all Canadians throughout the education system - from pre-school through to community colleges and universities.

8. There must be public education on a Canada-wide basis, presented in a culturally sensitive manner, to stop violence.

9. There must be mandatory education for professionals - including teachers, judges, spiritual leaders, physicians and others - and accountability within the professions regarding attitudes and behaviour toward women.

10. There must be recognition that ritual abuse exists across Canada.

11. Canada must take the lead internationally in naming violence against women as a human rights issue.

12. Every Canadian Member of Parliament must

provide leadership in making the issue of combating violence against women a priority.

13. Governments and organizations, families and individuals must find ways to eliminate sexist and racist attitudes and practices as a first step toward achieving zero tolerance for violence against women.

It's ironic that the week before this interim report (titled *The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women — A Progress Report*), was released, the Tory government announced a 1.9 million dollar survey on violence. Women's groups around the country are understandably outraged. Almost two million dollars wasted in confirming yet again what is already known and what has been ably articulated over and over. As the interim report concludes — there is need for immediate action — not the draining away of scarce dollars that are desperately needed to provide services.

To end violence against women in our society, we must have a government that has women's interests in its culture and the political determination to effect change. Not a Tory government. Not a Liberal government. For women, the only choice is a New Democrat government. Substantive action on violence against women depends on a strong New Democrat presence in Ottawa. Watch for a federal election campaign coming to an NDP office near you. ☐

CHARLEY BERESFORD is chair of the NDP Women's Rights Committee

RESOURCE GUIDE

Here is a partial list of emergency and support services available for women who are physically or emotionally abused. For further information or assistance contact the agency listed.

Battered Women's Support Services
687-1868 (business)
687-1867 (counselling)

Disabled Women's Network (DAWN)
584-4449

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
681-8480

Single Mother's Support Services
683-2531

Vancouver Lesbian Connection
254-8458

Vancouver Status of Women
255-5511

Vancouver Women's Health Collective
255-8285

WAWAW Rape Crisis Line
255-6344

Rape Relief
872-8212

Helping Spirit Lodge
872-6649

Indian Homemaker's Association
876-0944

Hey-Way'-Noqu'
874-1831

Burnaby Family Life Institute
299-9836

Coquitlam SHARE Society
931-3110

Deltassist Community Services
594-3455

TRANSITION HOUSES

Abbotsford
Transition House 852-6008

Burnaby
Marguerite Dixon House 298-3454

Chilliwack
Ann Davis Transition House 792-3116

Coquitlam
Transition House 464-2020

Langley
Ishtar Transition House 530-9442

Maple Ridge
Cythera Transition House 467-9966

Mission
Transition House 826-7800

North Vancouver
Emily Murphy House 987-3374

Powell River
Safe Homes 485-2174

Richmond
Nova Transition House 270-4911

Sechelt
Sunshine Coast House 885-2944

Squamish
Howe Sound Women's Centre 892-5748

Surrey
Evergreen Transition House 584-3301

Vancouver
Kate Booth House 872-7774

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RATES PER YEAR: \$10 individual, \$15 institution

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