



Mountain Womyn

International Women's Day 2009

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As we plan our International Women's Day celebration I can't help but think of all the women who will be celebrating this day all around the world.

In Golden we will be celebrating International Women's Day with various performances by talented women from Golden. Our event will be held at the Kicking horse River Lodge on Saturday, March 7th. Food and Drinks will be available in the Bugaboo Café at 6pm, it is a pay your own way event, but the celebration, which will begin at 7pm, is free.

This is a celebration of women; who we are, what we struggle with, and our relationships with each other and ourselves in our own right ... rights.

There are many women around the world who will be celebrating this day with protests, many women who are still fighting for their rights in their countries, still fighting for equality, rights to education, rights to be.

According to www.internationalwomensday.com about 28 IWD events are planned throughout India, events that spread awareness on issues pertaining to racism, gender equality and quality of life, and events that work to empower women to stand up to justice and inequality. These IWD events range from book readings to art exhibits and gatherings to listen to guest speakers inform women on the rights of their health, education and violence prevention.

An event in Cambodia will bring women together who work in garment factories to promote health by raising awareness on sexual and reproductive health services in relation to family planning and safe abortion.

In Mexico women will honour and celebrate the feminine within through a sacred dance, women will dance around flowers and candles.

In Japan women will celebrate each other with a night on the town...

In Trinidad and Tobago, an educational celebration will work to protect women who work in schools from violence off and on campus...

In Russia IWD is a public holiday that celebrates women and their social, economic and political achievements....

We may have come a long way here in North America, though there are still many issues to overcome. Issues that not only affect women, but their families and their children, issues, that, if overcome would lead to a healthier and happier life for everyone.

International Women's Day is a time to celebrate each other, yes, but it is also a time to remember the many feminists from the past who have worked and made sacrifices to make change, and as you can tell from the events that will be taking place on this day all around the world, we are still working to make change and maintaining what feminists from that past have set in place for us.

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“Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I may not reach them, but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.”

—Louisa May Alcott

Golden Womens Resource Centre
Golden, British Columbia

Services Include

Safe Homes Program
Outreach Services
Advocacy & Support
Internet Access
Resource Library
Computer Support
Good Karma Exchange
Free Condoms and Female Supplies

Staff

Roni Beauregard, *Safe Homes Coordinator: 250-344-2101*
Laurie Dalzell, *Executive Director: 250-344-5317*
Cheryl Verheyden, *Outreach Coordinator: 250-344-5317*
Sarah Wegelin, *Special Projects Coordinator: 250-344-5317*

Hours of Operation

Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday,
10am-5pm
Wednesday
10am-7pm
Friday
10am-4pm

Visit Us...

In person: 419C 9th. Ave. N
By Mail: P.O. Box 2343
Golden. B.C.
VOA 1H2

Online:

www.goldenwomenscentre.ca

From the Frontline

Hey Mister, Get off my sister....

by Peggy Chalmers, Co-Chair, GWRC Board of Directors

1970, the year that I graduated from high school, was not a time when families talked about rape around the dinner table. Because I was already involved in a feminist organization at that time, because I volunteered at a crisis center, and because my parents were intelligent and open-minded, our dinner table conversation was outside the norm. For most of the population, rape was not a topic for discussion. It was such an uncomfortable a word that, about this time, the name for the oilseed crop was changed to 'canola'.

Rape certainly was not the only 'taboo' topic. Physical and emotional abuse of women and children, particularly among one's own circle of family and acquaintances, was not spoken of. Knowledge of such abuse was certainly not acted upon. No one – family, friends, or politicians – wanted to 'interfere'. Change was in the air.

In 1981, amidst criticism that certain "uprising women" were damaging the sacred institution of family by providing a safe haven for battered women and children, Vancouver opened one of Canada's first transition houses. About the same time, certain "uppity women", as we preferred to be called, invented a brand new system of "safe homes" to provide sanctuary in Golden.

A swelling of feminists succeeded in having an equality clause included in Canada's new Constitution in 1982. Only a month later, Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East MP) bravely faced a room full of ignorant and insensitive men and attempted to educate them. She explained how the justice system failed to protect women and failed to prosecute rapists and "wife-beaters". When she noted that, at the time, it was estimated that one in 10 Canadian husbands beat their wives regularly, she was forced to stop because the room erupted with laughter and joking. If the 'boys' thought that was funny, they would think it hilarious to consider that estimates in 2009 report that 1 in 3 women are abused.

It's not funny. It is disgusting and cannot be excused or condoned.

Today, almost thirty years after it began, the safe home system in Golden is still busy. Our mothers, daughters and sisters are still being bruised and abused.

Now we know. And knowledge brings a certain obligation. We need to reach out – all of us – women, men and children – to anyone that we suspect is being abused. We need to teach our sons and daughters, because they will ensure a future society that is kinder and more compassionate.

There is no shame in being a victim or a survivor. The only shame is in knowing and doing nothing.

It is easy to become disheartened. The explosion of Internet pornography, sex tourism and trafficking of women and children makes me want to weep with grief and anger and frustration. Then I look at all of the wonderful, gentle, loving men in my life and remind myself that most people are good and decent. I remind myself that acts of violence towards weaker members of our society are acts of a dying patriarchy. Civilized people will demand a civilized society.

I am hopeful.

This would be a perfect time to become more pro-active in our community. The Golden Women's Resource Centre is always in need of volunteers. To learn more, phone 250-344-5317 or better yet, drop in at 419-9th Ave. N

Dates to look Out for....

April

Prevention of Violence Against Women Week: April 19 – 25

Keep your calendar open for this important week, some very special events and workshops are being planned for this week.

National Volunteer Week:

April 19 – 25

Again, keep your calendar open for some events that will recognize our many wonderful volunteers.


**For more information
check us out on-line:
www.goldenwomencentre.ca**

**or contact GWRC:
250-344-5317**



From the Frontline

A Time for Reflection and Celebration

by Peggy Chalmers, Co-Chair, GWRC Board of Directors

The seeds were planted for International Women's Day as far back as the 1700s, when women in France marched on Versailles. In North America, it all started in 1908, in New York City. That year, 15,000 women, primarily workers in the garment industry, marched in the street for voting rights, better pay and shorter hours (i.e. 10 hrs/day). 15,000 women! The following year, on February 28th, International Women's Day was first celebrated, following a declaration by the Socialist Party of America. Despite originating in North America, I.W.D. was, for the most part, not recognized here until the Feminist Revolution, starting in the late 1960s.

Women on the other side of the world were fighting for the same goals, at the same time. There was a swelling international working class movement, composed mainly of women, who were rallying against low pay and exploitation, while struggling to maintain peace. In 1913 the date for International Women's Day was changed to March 8th. That day, on the eve of WW. I, textile workers in St. Petersburg, Russia, staged the first rally for I.W.D. Thousands of workers walked out of the factories where they were working. Marching to other factories, they exhorted other workers to join them. Soon tens of thousands of women were marching in the streets. Doors of the homes they passed were thrown open, as mothers and grandmothers joined them, wiping floury hands on their aprons as they raised their voices to demand "bread and roses". The 'bread' referred to decent pay. The 'roses' referred to decent working conditions. I can only imagine what an exhilarating and empowering day that was to the women of St. Petersburg. I imagine, too, that more than a few men must have been unnerved by the sight, perhaps having the premonition that change was 'afoot' (pun intended).

A year later, on March 8th, 1914, the Russian Revolution began. Some people think that this date was a coincidence.

In 1917 Russian women went on strike for "bread and peace", in response to the death of over 2,000,000 Russian soldiers in war. This strike immobilized the country to such an extent that four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and women were given the right to vote

Today, International Women's Day is an official national holiday in many parts of the world, including Eastern European countries, China, Vietnam, Brazil, Cuba and many of the countries in Africa. This day is a symbol for all of us who honor women's struggles to improve their lives, and the lives of all humankind. It is a time to reflect on the struggles of women for equality, justice, peace and development. It is a time to remember our foremothers who risked violent retaliation and social ostracism because they fought for what they knew was right. It is a time to celebrate the women in our lives, and women around the world, who stand together in solidarity.



From the Frontline

Update from Outreach by Cheryl Verheyden, Outreach Coordinator

Well, winter is definitely here, and just when you think it's almost over, we get hit with another healthy dose of it! Mother Nature is always keeping us on our toes here in Golden, that's for sure!

Our winter girlz group is well under way, and seems to be just flying by! I guess time really does fly when you're having fun! Just a quick note to any girls who are interested in a long-term commitment to girlz group, over the next few sessions, we will have a couple projects underway that will span the course of a few seasons. We are working on turning the good karma exchange into a more organized retail hot spot (still free, of course) that the girls will be totally in charge of, which will build up over the next few seasons to a massive fashion show out in the community to help raise awareness of women's issues as well as the resources we offer. We will also be starting a community garden project that the girls will have a chance to be a part of, planting their own plots and gaining experience nurturing and growing their own flowers and veggies.

The community garden project will be run in the spring through summer through the women's centre which will be a sanctuary for all women and children to come and get their hands dirty, get connected to nature, teach each other and learn new techniques for growing their own food and flowers, and be able to take their bounty home at the end of the day. We are looking for volunteers to help get this project started, as well as anyone who is interested in taking part in any way. If anyone is interested, or wants more details, please feel free to contact me at any time at the women's centre.

Until then, enjoy the last of the winter season, as the days get longer, the sun starts to beam down, and we welcome this time of new beginnings.

Update from Special Projects by Sarah Wegelin, Special Projects Coordinator

The 'Let's Get Involved' program has been well received in our community with over 60 women and girls signed up and participating in the various components of the program.

It has allowed the Golden Women's Resource Centre to connect and form a different kind of relationship with various organizations in Golden as well as connect many women with these organizations in a variety of roles. While the Golden Women's Resource Centre has always done referrals with clients to community services and programs, we are now continuously connecting volunteers and playing active roles in these organizations as well.

This program has brought a new group of women into the GWRC to not only participate in programs and services, but to volunteer and be active members of the GWRC.

Newcomer's Group

The Newcomer's Group has brought many new women into the Women's Centre and has shed a positive light on the GWRC's role in the community of Golden. Though this program was created for women who are new to the community, it has been well received by women who are new to getting involved. Some of our participants have lived in Golden for many years, but weren't too clear on how to play an active role in our community. Our info sessions have been successful in letting women know where, how and when to get involved. Having a variety of program providers present at these info sessions have reached out to many women, letting them know there is an opportunity for everyone, depending on their interests.

Continued on page 5

Update from Special Projects Continued...

Computer Support

Our Computer Support Program has enabled the GWRC to make computer support available to women who are looking to gain confidence in their computer skills. Through this program we are able to set up one on one support with women through one-hour appointments twice a week, this is on top of drop-in clients who come in to use our computers and receive help.

Since the beginning of the program the GWRC has helped 74 clients through our computer support program. These clients received help using the Internet, Microsoft Office programs and setting up and using email accounts.

We will be hosting a series of workshops over the next three months. Collaboration with the College of the Rockies will lead our participants into an introductory workshop at its facility.

We have about 20 women signed up for computer support program in addition to our drop-in clients. These women have been very enthusiastic about the program and thankful for the help and support they are receiving through this program and are gaining confidence with every visit.

Junior Girlz Group

The Junior Girlz Group component to the 'Let's Get Involved' program has allowed the GWRC to open its existing Girlz Group, for Grade 6-9 girls, to girls in grade 5. We started the program in the summer of 2008 and had eight girls sign up and participate. Our theme for the summer was *Discovering Our Community*, during which we visited the Golden Museum, toured around Golden taking pictures, volunteered at the St. Paul's thrift shop, learned about animals in our region and had a visit from former Mayor Jim Doyle. We had excellent feedback in regards to the program from the girls and their parents.

Our fall program, with the theme, *Wonderful Women of our Community, Country and the World* maxed out in program participation with 11 girls signing up. This session allowed for the girls to meet women in our community who make a difference by learning about the Stephan Lewis Foundation and participating in the Rockies for African GoGo's Scrabble fundraising event. They also contributed to Women's Centre history by adding a page in our wonderful women of our community scrapbook. Some interesting topics during this session challenged the girls into thinking of creative ways to overcome physical and emotional barriers, and express what's important to them through the use of art and writing activities.

Our winter girls-group session focused on *Body Image, Healthy Choices and Alternative Solutions*. We looked at how photography software manipulates pictures into unrealistic body images and asked the girls to create their own ads for public awareness about eating disorders by using healthy images and positive messages.

We connected with the Golden Art's Council and did a special project for its Snow King Festival. We also promoted healthy activities by including yoga and swimming in the winter session.

The Junior Girls Program has paved a new path for our grade 6-9 group. While the Girlz Group program has been successful in raising issues among the girls to spark discussion and raise awareness, we have seen much enthusiasm in the girls by incorporating community connection and volunteering into all Girls Group sessions, which really compliments the program. This sort of partnering with other organizations has led the GWRC to build strong relationships with other organizations while giving these girls an opportunity to feel strongly connected to their community, inspiring a sense of belonging, increasing self-esteem while promoting healthy decision making and independent thinking.

Service shuffle poses risk for programs

by Roni Beauregard, Safe Homes Coordinator

Hello from the Safe Homes Program! Isn't it great to see some light in the sky when we get off work, or for that matter, when we leave in the morning? ☺

Since September the program has been running at a rate I have not seen in my seven year involvement with the GWRC. Historically there have been periods when things get ramped up, but it seems to be a steady stream now, to be honest, I am proud to be a part of it all.

We all need to understand the process of a woman who has been assaulted. The difficulty of strangers, RCMP members, Victim Services, Safe Homes Staff, Doctors and Nurses talking and questioning her about very personal and private matters during moments of extreme trauma. This is only one aspect of abuse, when you consider a woman living with a partner's verbal or emotional abuse who does not have the benefit of legislation to help her heal from her wounds that are not obvious to friends or family. Women who are in and who have survived abusive relationships, assaults and countless insults are brave and strong people, no matter what the toxic persons in their lives may be telling them.

The Safe Homes program has also taken advantage of opportunities to become involved in our community and to have a voice in the provincial realm.

I joined a team of individuals who are the Town of Golden's Housing Committee. Town Council is working to do something about affordable and attainable housing.

Remembering back, the GWRC would remind all the women who came in for services to please complete the housing survey; the time everyone took to fill out the housing survey has been a great asset in identifying how the community struggles with the housing and it also gives insight into workable solutions. On the provincial level, the GWRC sits on the board of directors for the British Columbia Yukon Society of Transition Houses (BCYSTH). The position is regional, and of course is known as 'the Kootenays'. The BCYSTH is a non-profit society that includes a membership of transition houses, safe homes, second-stage housing and children who witness abuse (CWWA) programs, province-wide. The BCYSTH offers regular training opportunities, and importantly, a voice with government decision making.

Most recently, the Gordon Campbell Liberal Government has proposed changes to the way these programs are delivered. The suggestion is to have BC Housing take over the contacts for transition houses and second-stage housing, then to have the Ministry of Solicitor General and Public Safety oversee the delivery of programs such as safe homes, outreach and CWWA. This is cause for concern because this ministry does not support counselling as part of service delivery and it is facing serious cuts, and the most disconcerting for me personally is after watching the evening news for the past six months I am shown that the system is overwhelmed already on many levels. Court, Law Enforcement, jails are overcrowded. The current government did not engage in conversation with anyone working with battered women before making this announcement, when organizations found out about the proposed move it was 'leaked', not announced. When there was disagreement about this move, government representatives specifically asked we not go public with this, but sent representatives from BC Housing who could not answer questions about what this meant to vital programs for women's safety, and safe places. To date, there still has not been an answer to very questions about this proposed move.

Women of Golden, please question political representatives about this during the upcoming election campaign. While you may be one of the fortunate few who have never had the need to use a program to help you keep safe, someone you love more than likely has, or is dying to tell you she needs one.

Violence against women is not going to go away until our entire society perceives women as equal, this statement supports the fact that we need to protect the services we have to support each other, and to protect women and their families in the future.

GOLDEN WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

GOLDEN WOMEN CENTRE SOCIETY

Board of Directors

Co-Chair Peggy Chalmers, Business Owner

Co-Chair Dalia Yanai, Yoga Instructor & Holistic Health Practitioner

Co-Secretary, Hilary Frazer, Teacher

Co-Secretary, Monique Limoges,
Administrator

Director, Judith Susan Doyle, Physiotherapist.
Manager, Golden RCMP Victim Services

Director, Janice Gustofson, Accounting Clerk

Director, Amy Sharples, RN

Director, Katherine Hamilton, Community Development

Women's Centre's Board of Directors are elected at our Annual General Meeting, held in June. They represent a wide variety of talented and professional women within our community.

The Golden Women's Resource Centre was formally organized in 1978, and became a registered charity in 1983. The Golden Women's Resource Centre provides information, supportive counseling, educational workshops, free Internet access and most importantly a safe, non-judgmental, supportive and welcoming environment for women to gather, relax and share ideas. We serve an area of the East Kootenays bounded by Spillimacheen, Donald, and Field, home to approximately 10,000 people.

The Golden Women's Resource Centre is committed to activities related to improving the status of women.

We are actively engaged in efforts to end violence against women and their children as well as end the tolerance of violence against women.

Our Vision: The Golden Women's Resource Centre Society supports the empowerment of women locally and globally by building women's individual capacity, acting as a catalyst for change and leading the way to a non-violent, socially just, healthy and diverse society.

Our Mission: The Golden Women's Resource Centre Society is a registered non-profit charity, dedicated to the safety and empowerment of women. The Golden Women's Resource Centre provides a secure

environment, support, information and resources. The Society also provides outreach services, education and advocacy for women and issues that affect them.

Become a Member

Support your Women's Centre by initiating or renewing your membership. Your membership helps us continue to offer the services you enjoy, as well as to expand our offerings to meet your interests and needs.

To become a member, simply fill out the information below and bring it in or mail it to the Women's Center. Cost is \$10, but don't let your budget stop you. Pay what you can afford: Every dollar we receive makes a difference!

Thank you!

GWRC Member Information

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____