



NEWS RELEASE

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VICTORIA HOPE SOCIETY

Community Grants Program Launched

VICTORIA – The Victoria Hope Society, a non-profit volunteer society committed to supporting the role of grassroots and community agencies in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, is launching another round of its Community Grants Program. VHS Community Grants will support collaborative, innovative projects in the areas of prevention, education, support services and/or advocacy.

Expressions of Interest from Greater Victoria organizations and individuals are invited by February 28th. Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and provide funding of six to twelve months duration. Projects must commence no later than September 1, 2007.

In last year's round of Community Grants, four innovative projects received funding:

Volunteer Victoria's **Youth Volunteer Connections** engages marginalized youth in supportive volunteering environments preventing involvement in substance use and other high risk behaviours. "Volunteering gives you a strong sense of accomplishment. I did something that actually mattered", noted one participant.

The Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre's **Seeking Safety** project addresses the devastation caused by the complex issues of women suffering from post traumatic stress (as a result of sexual violence) and substance use. VWSAC believes that these women, who meet in weekly group sessions, benefit from information on the relationship between substance use and healing, and from developing skills for managing feelings.

The Prostitute Education and Empowerment Society has created two weekly **Drop-ins for Street Entrenched Women** at Streetlink and Sandy Merriman shelters to provide a vital step between the streets and more intensive programs for sex workers wanting to improve their lives. "We'd suspected that the step was too big from the streets to a lot of the programs we run at PEERS, and these drop-ins have been the perfect remedy" said PEERS Executive Director, Jody Paterson.

The YM/YWCA's **Bridging the Gap** and Theatreworks Victoria operate **Meth: iron fist, a Theatre for Living**. This project promotes dialogue about crystal meth in our community - involving youth in exploring their experiences with meth and addiction, and in creating and performing interactive plays for the public and in area schools. Two public performances took place in November and school performances are ongoing.

Details regarding the EOI submission process are available by contacting the Victoria Hope Society at victoriahopesociety@gmail.com.

Contact: Katherine Cook, VHS Grants Administrator (250) 598-6619