

WOMEN

making waves

VOLUME 18 :: ISSUE 3

www.bwss.org :: Fall/07

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WOMEN

making waves

Women Making Waves is published by **Battered Women's Support Services**, a non-profit organization supporting women facing abuse and violence.

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By Angela Marie MacDougall

At BWSS, we understand and recognize how systemic oppression (colonization, racism, poverty etc) and experiences of interpersonal violence/abuse are inter-related to women's use of substances and emotional/behavioural challenges...what is commonly understood as "mental health issues".

The BWSS Direct Service Model

Working With What is in Front of Us

We have learned from our own experiences as women and women survivors, and have heard very clearly from the women who access our services, that colonization, around the globe and in this place now known as Canada, racism, poverty, and other forms of inequalities literally make us sick – physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually!!

In attempts to cure ourselves we seek things like substances illicit and licit to soothe our pain, to distance us from the realities we deal with each day and to find a sense of joy, euphoria, sedation and/or stimulation. We generate fantasies, have fears, suspicions that sometimes get out of hand and run amok, we may start hearing things, seeing things, imagining things and other "mental health issues"



or other problematic behaviours to assist us to manage, to feel powerful and deal with what is unbearable.

All of these coping mechanisms tend to bring us, at some point, to the attention of "systems" and then come the labels and diagnosis and related things... that may or may not be helpful...this time.

At BWSS in our direct service program, we work with the woman in front of us. We meet women where they are at, not where we think they "should" be and approach our counselling and crisis work from the following core assumptions:

1. Women are the experts of their experience and their healing journey
2. Violence against women is the result of systemic oppression
3. Many current dysfunctional behaviours and/or responses may have originated as legitimate coping responses to trauma, oppression or early loss/attachment
4. Women who experience repeated trauma in childhood and adulthood were deprived

Continues on Page 2

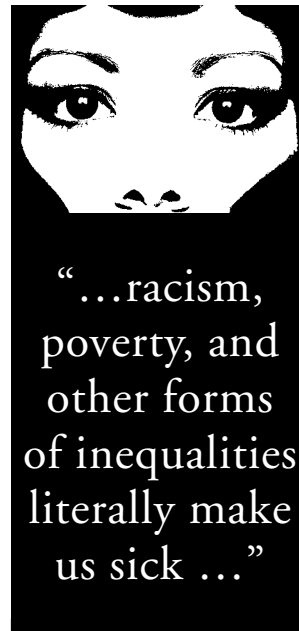
The BWSS Direct Service Model *(Continued from Page 1)*

- of the opportunity to develop certain skills necessary for adult coping.
5. We look at problematic behaviours (such as angry outbursts) in context of what is going on for the woman at the time...behaviours in context
 6. Trauma and systemic oppression sever core connections to one's family, one's community, one's identity and ultimately to oneself.
 7. Women who have been abused repeatedly feel powerless and feel unable to advocate for themselves and the systems are often prepared to render her powerless.
 8. Simply living in the body of an oppressed person is traumatic and exhausting.

Building on these assumptions, we use a model of empowerment and recovery that includes the following elements:

1. Feminist anti-oppression analysis informs every aspect of our work
2. Safety is the initial goal above all, physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual
3. We believe that trauma and systemic oppression is disconnecting and that broken connections can only heal in the context of new connections and therefore believe that recovery and healing is most effective when it occurs in a group format.
4. We believe that early losses and abandonment have a significant role
5. Include basic information on how systemic oppression of marginalized people contributes to and can compound women's experiences of trauma as well as negatively impact on her ability to heal/recover in all our service delivery
6. Profound mistrust and/or profound fear and/or related observations or behaviours including where a woman is having trouble getting a handle on what is real can happen for some of us at some point in our lifetime when we have experienced severe abuse/trauma/oppression and for some of us it seems like a permanent state of being
7. Basic education about physical and sexual abuse and how current behaviours are linked to past abuses.
8. A re-framing of current responses as attempts to cope with unbearable trauma and systemic oppression

9. An appreciation of the problem solving attempts locked and hidden in certain repetitive behaviours.
10. Education focusing on basic skills in self-regulation, boundary maintenance, and communication
11. Basic education about female sexuality and correcting misperceptions.
12. Creation of a healing community by providing recovery services in a group format.
13. Rediscovery of and reconnection to lost memories, feelings and perceptions.
14. An opportunity for women to experience a sense of competence and resolution as they face the demons from the past.
15. An opportunity for women to trust their own perceptions about reality and to receive validation from others for those correct perceptions



(adapted from the work of Maxine Harris, Lisa Najavits, Judith Herman, Liz Choquette, Maggie Ziegler, Maureen McEvoy, Kathleen Whipp and Angela Marie MacDougall)

At BWSS we offer all of our services with an understanding of the interconnectedness of oppression, trauma, substance use and “mental health issues”. We offer several specialized groups including:

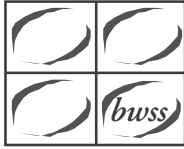
Inside The Circle Residential School Survivor Group
Healing From Trauma Through Empowerment Stage I,
Healing From Trauma Through Empowerment Stage II,
Healing From Trauma Through Empowerment Stage III,
Finding Your Way Back To Yourself

– Abandonment Recovery Group,
Women Seeking Safety – Substance Use and Trauma Recovery Group

The work we do is complex for sure, it is informed by trauma theory, addiction theory, attachment theory, anti-oppression analysis, family systems theory... the work of the researchers and academics...at the end of the day it is very simple, really...When we are hurting and we're scared sometimes all we need is someone to be there when we need it, to listen, not place judgment or criticize or blame, to demonstrate compassion and caring. And that is what we are all about at BWSS...

Abandonment, Attachment and Action Understanding and healing the wounds of broken connections

A two day workshop with Magie Ziegler, M.A., R.C.C.



Training and Development

Participants in this workshop will:

- Explore the wound of abandonment in childhood and adulthood
- Examine the impact and consequences of early attachment and abandonment experiences and how they affect later life
- Identify when abandonment experiences become traumatic
- Appreciate the social and neurobiological importance of relationships
- Learn tools for different stages of the journey to recovery and health
- Develop practical skills to enhance their work with people who have attachment and abandonment wounds
- Gain insight into their own attachment/abandonment experiences and the impact of these on their work

Acknowledging, understanding and moving through abandonment experiences is a journey into the present moment, allowing for the creation of new relationships with the self and others. In this transformation we can let go. To dance with abandonment is to be wild and unrestrained

To be abandoned means to be forsaken, given up, left behind, cast aside, jilted, rejected, dumped, ditched. The painful experience of being abandoned often leads to abandoning the self in an attempt to distance from painful feelings and memories. The abandoned become like empty houses: neglected, deserted, uninhabited, empty.

Combining presentation and dialogue with art, writing, storytelling and skill-building, this highly experiential workshop offers participants an opportunity to engage with ideas and activities that can support working through abandonment wounds and re-engaging with life

Fee: Sliding scale \$ 25 - \$ 200
Dates: Monday November 5th and Tuesday November 6th, 2007
Location: Aboriginal Friendship Centre
 1607 Hastings Street East
 Vancouver, BC (at Commercial Drive)

For registration and more information contact Battered Women's Support Services at: finance@bwss.org
 to register please email: finance@bwss.org or call Heidi at: 604-687-1868.

other upcoming events and workshops



*Fashionism, noun /fash- uh niz- uh m. /;
 The use of feminist activism and fashion to affect change in women's lives.*

MSC 1092 "Active Fashionism since 2001" **Grand Opening Celebration!** 

*Fashionism, noun /fash- uh niz- uh m. /;
 The use of feminist activism and fashion to affect change in women's lives.*
Shopping, entertainment and door prizes!

Details
 Date: Saturday October 27
 Time: 8-11 pm
 Location: MSC 1092 @ 1092 Seymour
 Tickets: Donation \$5-\$100 (at the door)
 (Charitable donation receipts available)
 Theme: Masquerade

Performances by:
 Jb the firstlady
 and
 Sade
 (Other performances TBA)



By Angela Marie
MacDougall

On Friday, September 7, 2007 BWSS stood in support of The Indigenous Free Peoples School March, Rally and Hip Hop Show organized to draw attention to the historic and current context with the RCMP and Municipal Police forces and the Indigenous women and men in the making of this nation as a nation known as Canada.

A Violent and Painful History...And the Current Situation

This was the 2nd march held to draw attention on the daily experience of harassment felt by many Aboriginal people in the cities and towns across Canada. Leading the way were several Indigenous women and commenced from Commercial Drive and Broadway to Grandview Park at Charles and Commercial. Several women and men spoke along the route speaking about current and the historic relationship between the Indigenous people of this land now known as Canada, the RCMP and municipal police departments.

We learned that an original mandate of the very first police forces were to enforce the new colonial laws and undermine and outlaw the original Indigenous



justice systems and laws that had existed prior since time immemorial.

In 1873, the Northwest Mounted Police (later to become the Royal North West and then the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) was established to regulate settlement - making room for settlers by forcing the Indigenous population off their land to acquire the Indigenous lands and resources by relying heavily on police forces. Significantly, the police forces removed Indigenous women, whom were often culturally responsible for land use and ownership, from their traditional roles, so that settler society could access the land more easily.

It was understood by the people at the time that the NWMP's

members were notorious for assaulting, abusing and raping Indigenous women and their children. Members of the NWMP, in an effort to shift the blame and claim innocence, would institute racist, sexist stereotypes on Indigenous women through the media, public discourse and even policy. The vilification of Indigenous women at this time was built through fabrications about Indigenous women as "immoral". The deceptions they cast about Indigenous women remain in many ways today and explain the way in which many Indigenous women are treated by the general public and let's not forget Paul Jordan Gilbert, Robert Pickton, Judge Ramsay and the Highway of Tears.*

The event was an empowering experience closing the evening was a Hip Hop show featuring two talented local activists, community members and MC's Jb thefirstlady and Curtis Clearsky frontman for The Dignified who shared some of their

rhymes and inspired us all through music with a message. Reminding us that before all the misogyny and crime rhymes Hip Hop is a creative tool for oppressed people to find, to use their voices, to share their experiences and for social change.

Battered Women's Support Services staff and volunteers prepared and served food.

Credits:

Jb thefirstlady

<http://www.myspace.com/jbthefirstlady>

Curtis Clearsky

<http://www.myspace.com/curtisclearsky>

* Indigenous Free People's School
indigenous.free.school@gmail.com

Legal Advocacy for Women Survivors of Violence

“BWSS is a feminist organization, [which] seeks to empower the women who access our services so that they may find safety and control in their lives. BWSS supports a woman – no matter the choices she makes – and works with her to resolve the issues surrounding abuse in a safe, judgment-free environment.

Issues of custody and access have increasingly become a part of the work we do. More and more women are finding that the civil legal system (family legal process) is another way for the abuser to exert more control and abuse.

The current *Family Relations Act (Act)* does not do enough to address the abuse that women and children experience through the abusive tactics and the power that court orders give to the abusive ex-partner. The system does not take into consideration factors such as gender inequalities, current and past abuse history, immigration issues, class, race, access to jobs, access to training, access to housing and all the systemic inequalities that contribute to violence against women and children. It is imperative that the *Act* be updated and amended to include these aspects.”

The following is a list of recommendations around the need for **gender based analysis only**. To view the full document and full list of recommendations please visit the Battered Women's Support Services website at www.bwss.org.

Recommendations

- The *Family Relations Act* should recognize gender inequalities by including gender-based analysis in the form of a preamble to the *Family Relations Act*.
- The *Family Relations Act* should address the needs of mothers and children in assessing issues of safety and protection.
- Primary caregiving before separation should be recognized by awarding custody to the parent. This encourages consistency of care of the children and stability, thus ensuring the best interests of the children.
- Primary care should be defined to include all aspects of caregiving, such as day-to-day care and meeting the physical, social, educational and emotional needs of children. The parent who is proving primary caregiving should have the power to make the major decisions affecting the child's life.
- Ability to parent should not be tied to the financial means of the primary caregiver.”

Note: The above was adapted from a Brief to the Special Joint Senate-Commons Committee on Custody and Access created by Veenu Saini and Fatima Jaffer for BWSS in 1998. It was updated and revised by Rosa Arteaga and Darla Tomledan

To view the full document, please visit our website at www.bwss.org.

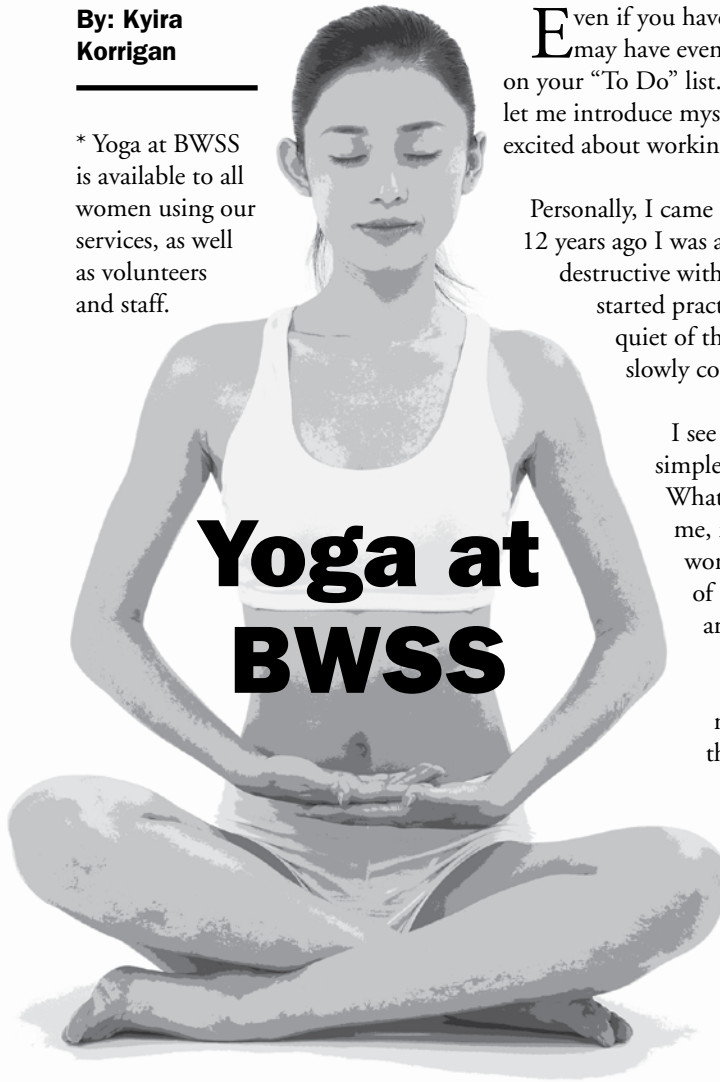


**Submission
to the
Family
Relations
Act Review
(Excerpt)**

**Submitted by,
Battered
Women's
Support
Services,
September 7,
2007**

**By: Kyira
Korrigan**

* Yoga at BWSS is available to all women using our services, as well as volunteers and staff.



Yoga at BWSS

Even if you haven't tried yoga yet, you've probably heard of it. You may have even taken a class or two, practiced for a while, or have it on your "To Do" list. Now, let me invite you to try a class at BWSS*. And, let me introduce myself, as the new yoga teacher for BWSS – I am really excited about working with this organization and meeting everyone!

Personally, I came to yoga at a very difficult period in my life – 12 years ago I was a recent immigrant to Canada, young and self-destructive with few coping skills other than drugs and denial. I started practicing yoga almost by accident, and found in the quiet of the practice the space to begin to open up to myself, to slowly come to terms with my pain and, finally, to heal.

I see yoga as a conversation we each have with ourselves; simple questions, which we bring to our complicated lives. What am I feeling? How am I breathing? What is alive in me, in this moment? The answers mostly come without words – sensation, movement, and awareness of the energy of life in our own bodies and in the world around us.

And in this wordless space, very gradually and naturally, many people find something sweet, which they have longed for – caring self-awareness.

And, just to make the process more attractive, yoga is fun, contributes greatly to your health, and makes your whole day flow easier. Try it for yourself! Students with all levels of experience and health are welcome to class.

Kyira Korrigan is a certified yoga therapist, meditation leader and practitioner of Indian massage.

Voices from the Front Line: Facilitating the BWSS Drop in Group

**By: Yvonne
Prochaska**

I have just completed the great opportunity of facilitating the drop-in support group for ten weeks here at BWSS. This has been my first experience facilitating a support group and although it has been quite brief, I

expect that I will look back on it over time to digest and assess the learning that it has provided me as I embark on a path of wanting to aid in the healing of others and myself.

Facilitating this group has been both rewarding and challenging. I have enjoyed experiencing other women and their stories, as well as how they are able to identify common experiences among one another and provide support when they feel they are able. I have found it reassuring that many of the

women who have come to the drop-in group have been open to discuss some painful experiences, and have been understanding, respectful of and patient with others. I have found comfort through women taking the courage to ask me about my personal experiences. I have felt validated by the attention I have been given, and the amount of appreciation I have been shown for my thoughts and words. It has been great for me to see women coming back after their first session; that they have given me the chance to get to know them a little bit better.

The challenges come from the unpredictability of the group. You never know what issues women will bring or how many women will come to group. Flexibility on the part of the instructor is extremely

important, as is the ability to observe and listen to the group with open curiosity; share ideas on how to discuss the topic(s) constructively to provide the women with support, understanding and validation of their feelings and experiences; as well as knowledge of resources that will help the women regain balance in their lives.

Overall I have been surprised at the ease with which conversation flows in the group, and how it benefits not only the women participating in the group but myself as well. This experience has taught me a lot about myself and has created an opportunity for me to learn about some of the areas in which I would like to grow both personally and as an effective facilitator.



Instructors:



Silvana Bazet,
Clinical Member,
Ontario Society of
Psychotherapists, is
a psychotherapist
in private practice,
trainer, consultant,
and community activist. She practises
psychotherapy from an anti-oppression
perspective and specializes in issues
related to sexual orientation, ethno-racial
identity, migration, and gender identity.

Farzana Doctor,

MSW, RSW, is a
consultant, trainer
and author
specializing in
organizational
diversity issues and clinical issues relating
to working with marginalized populations.
She is also a psychotherapist in private
practice, specializing in working with
individuals and couples from an anti-
oppression perspective.



Special Events

Un/divided Loyalties: Counselling Lesbian and Bisexual Women of Colour (#SPE146)

Lesbian and bisexual women of colour face multiple challenges in their lives. Systemic and interpersonal racism and heterosexism affect their self-esteem, their relationships, and their quality of life. They have complex identities and develop unique coping mechanisms to survive. This training offers psychotherapists, social workers, frontline, and health workers the opportunity to reflect upon the appropriate techniques for supporting clients in their own processes to lead more fulfilling lives. This course is offered in partnership with Battered Women's Support Services and BC Association of Specialized Victim Assistance and Counselling Programs.

Date(s): October 17, 2007
October 18, 2007

Fee: \$175; group rate, \$165 (plus \$2.50 LSF)

Gut A/symmetries: Working with Marginalized Clients (#SPE147)

A safe, self-exploratory course for counsellors, health care providers, and other helping professionals to explore how internalized racism and other oppressions affect us and the ways in which we provide services to others. Drawing upon their professional counselling experiences and anti-oppression practices, Silvana and Farzana will encourage you to explore the subtle ways that internalized oppression affects your relationships with your clients or patients. This course is for those who identify as Aboriginal people and people of colour only and is offered in partnership with Battered Women's Support Services.

Date(s): October 19, 2007

Fee: \$175; group rate, \$165 (plus \$2.50 LSF)

Course location: 715 McBride Boulevard, New Westminster, BC.
For more information contact Caroline White at 604.528.5620 or carolinew@jibc.ca.

www.jibc.ca/cfcs

Register early as seating is limited. Call 604.528.5590 or 1.877.528.5591



:: Social Action ::
ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

BWSS supported Indigenous Action In Effect,
by providing food for the feast.

FALL/07 Support Groups at BWSS

Inside The Circle

*Residential School Survivor
Healing Group For Women*
Thursdays from September 20
November 22 - 6pm to 8 pm

**Healing from Trauma through
Empowerment. Stage III**
Tuesday, October 9
from 6p.m to 8pm.

Drop-in Group.

Tuesdays from 12am to 2pm.

Healing from Trauma through Empowerment. Stage I

Wednesday, September 12th
from 6p.m to 8pm.

DEWC Group.

Tuesdays from 6pm to 8pm

Ten-Week Group.

Wednesday, September 12th
from 6pm to 8pm.



Empowering Women, Strengthening Communities Farewell from Olatz Sagarduy

While Battered Women's Support Services is committed to ensuring women dealing with violence in intimate relationships find the support and healing they deserve, we do not stop there. We strive to ensure that all women who are connected with the organization are empowered and supported, including the staff who work tirelessly to see that the women who access our services receive the absolute best advocacy and support possible. Please read on...

...Being the Legal Advocate at BWSS during the last 2 years, has been the most satisfactory achievement I have had in my adult life. I was able to use my legal background combined with my analysis on violence against women to help women alleviate their legal problems. I successfully worked in a foreign country with a foreign language, using my abilities acquired in the Basque Country together with the perspective I gained being an immigrant in Canada.

As well, I had been involved at BWSS since 1998 in many ways - as the Information Coordinator, Support Group Facilitator, Childminder, Relief Worker, Trainee, etc-. I have no words to express my gratitude to be part of a wonderful group of women working towards ending women's oppression. Overall, BWSS believed in me when I could hardly be understood, it listened to me when I needed to speak, it taught me what I thought I already knew, and it made me feel much stronger as a woman.

As sad as it's being to make the decision not to return to BWSS, I know it is time for me to be back home. I want to use my skills to contribute to the betterment of women in the Basque Country, and I will always be thankful to BWSS for making me who I am today.

In Solidarity • Olatz Sagarduy

BWSS Calendar of Events

Saturday, October 27th • *Grand Opening, MSC1092*

Join us to celebrate **Women's History Month** and the **BWSS Social Enterprise Program**. Win a Door Prize, enjoy the entertainment and check out all the great fashion! Tickets by donation (\$5-\$100).

Early December 2007 • *Christmas Hamper Program*

Sponsor a family through the BWSS Christmas Hamper Program, and help provide a holiday filled with cheer. Call us or check out our website, www.bwss.org, to find out more about how you can get involved.

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.

Payment Information

Enclosed cheque payable to BWSS
 VISA MasterCard American Express

Card Number
 Name on card
 Expiry Date /
 Signature

Contact Information

Name
 Address
 Phone
 Email

We respect your privacy and will not trade or sell your name to other organizations

I wish to receive the BWSS newsletter, *Making Waves*
 I have remembered BWSS in my will
 Please contact me to discuss how I can include BWSS in my financial and estate planning

Please send your completed form & donation to:

BWSS
 P.O. Box 21503
 1424 Commercial Dr.
 Vancouver, BC V5L 5G2

OR
By Phone 604.687.1868 ext. 315
By Fax 604.687.1864
Online www.bwss.org

Your gift is tax deductible. We will send you a tax receipt.

We would like to thank all of you who have made a donation to BWSS is the last few months. Your generous gifts have made a huge contribution towards our vital programs and services for women and our overarching goal of ending violence against women.

:: Thank You ::

- A Clean Break Home Cleaning
- Ajita Sharma
- Albertina Lamb
- Alison MacDonald
- Allan Rintoul
- Amanda Edmunds
- Amy Millar
- Angela Grand-Maison
- Baharam Bastami
- Blaine Ryland
- Candace Gaylord
- Candice Haslam
- Carol Behan
- Catherina Jean-Alfred Garlepy
- Collen Leishman
- Coreen Munk
- Daisy Harriet MCMurray
- Daniel Zamorano-Henriquez
- David Leeson
- David Morgan Camplon
- David Sampson
- Dawn Couture
- Debbie Guillemette
- Deborah Barnes
- Denise Scott
- Donald Crone
- Emberson Deo
- Eric Nilsson, ELN Living Ltd.
- Gary Gruchey
- Glennis O'Neil
- Gloria Stelting
- Grace Elaine Avila
- Grace Giard
- Grace Salez
- Hirut Getachew
- Ian Fripp
- James Hawkings
- Jamie Adair
- Jeannette Friesea
- Jennifer Iyan
- Jennifer Milne
- Jennifer Odendaal
- John Perrin
- Julie Lang
- Kamlesh Sahay
- Kathleen Murphy Marquez
- Kathleen Swan
- Keith Hawkins
- Kent Sunde
- Kerry Marsnas
- Kevin Wormeli
- Kimberly Gregory
- La Bussola Restaurant Ltd.
- Lance Varhanik
- Laura Erwin
- Laura Surette
- Lawrence Patrick
- Linda Chiasson
- Lisa Blake Knox
- Lisa Lomond
- Malkit Keta Brar
- Marcel Lachance
- Margaret Ferries
- Margaret MacDonald
- Marie Friggon
- Marpole Lion's Club
- Mary Parsons
- Maureen Simpkins
- Melea Holland
- Michael Alterton
- Michael Govette
- Michael Mayerhofer
- Nastaran Bastami
- Nicholas Richardson
- Nicole and Tony Clack
- Norman Bolenback
- Peter Dettlaff
- Peter Heinen
- Peter Yam
- Pricilla Muir
- Randy McCann
- Raphael Lopoukhne
- Reilly Boisvert
- Renata Sarkozi
- Revinder Weening
- Richard Beason
- Richard Campbell
- Roberta Hospodarec
- Ronald Dunbar
- Ross Hansen
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Sabrina Baker
- Sarah Widmer
- Shane Haggstrom
- SHARE London Life Charities
- Sharon Barry
- Shelly Delta Mattia
- Sunita Khtaria
- Suzanne Sanders
- Swami Manjula
- Sylvia Girard
- TELUS Employees
- Tracey Donnachie
- Wesley McBride