

Barton Street Community Partners for Crime Prevention

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1.0 BACKGROUND

Phase One of the Barton Street Community Partners for Crime Prevention took place in 2000. It included extensive consultation with primary stakeholders including youth, women, sex trade workers, residents and business people.

The project included an extensive needs assessment into the issue of women and the sex trade. It concluded that work must be done from a harm reduction perspective and that there was a real need to create a common understanding of the issues of sex trade work before any systemic change could take place.

These concepts were incorporated into the Phase Two project.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Phase Two of the Barton Street Community Partners for Crime Prevention had a broad mandate to address issues related to sex trade work amongst women in the Barton Street neighbourhood. While the original geographical area was defined as the territory from Wellington Street to Sherman Avenue, and Cannon Street to the lakefront, it quickly became obvious that sex trade work is mobile, and not restricted to one particular location.

As such the work was expanded to be more general in nature and agencies from across the city were invited to take part in the activities of the project.

There were three main components of the project:

1. Education of Service Providers
2. Education of the General Public
3. Education of Sex Trade Workers from a Harm Reduction Perspective

The objectives of each of these components were met, although not always in the ways originally imagined in the planning process.

Additionally, the Outreach Worker for the Barton Street project took on an active role in the Sex Trade Task Force of Hamilton as a way of addressing all three components holistically.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

Various program models were reviewed with regard to drop-in centres/outreach models, residential programs, and fundraising. Training models were also examined although significant difficulty was experienced finding organizations who were willing to share the details of their programs.

Overall, it was agreed that programs and services need to be:

- conducted from a harm-reduction perspective
- flexible to meet the needs of sex workers
- holistic and understanding of the complex situations faced by sex workers
- go to sex trade workers (outreach) as opposed to operating only fixed sites
- allow for mistakes and multiple attempts at change (for exit programs)
- provide life skills and employment/education supports
- non-judgmental and understanding of the multiple needs and experiences

The Best Practices document is attached in the appendix.

4.0 SURVEY OF COMMUNITY AGENCIES

A survey was developed by the Outreach Worker in consultation with SPRC Social Planners, and the Barton Street Advisory Committee. There were multiple goals for the survey including: to determine what services were available in the community, what services and agencies sex workers were accessing, the demographics of sex workers accessing agencies, the level of training agencies were receiving on the issues and the interest/benefit in training on sex trade work.

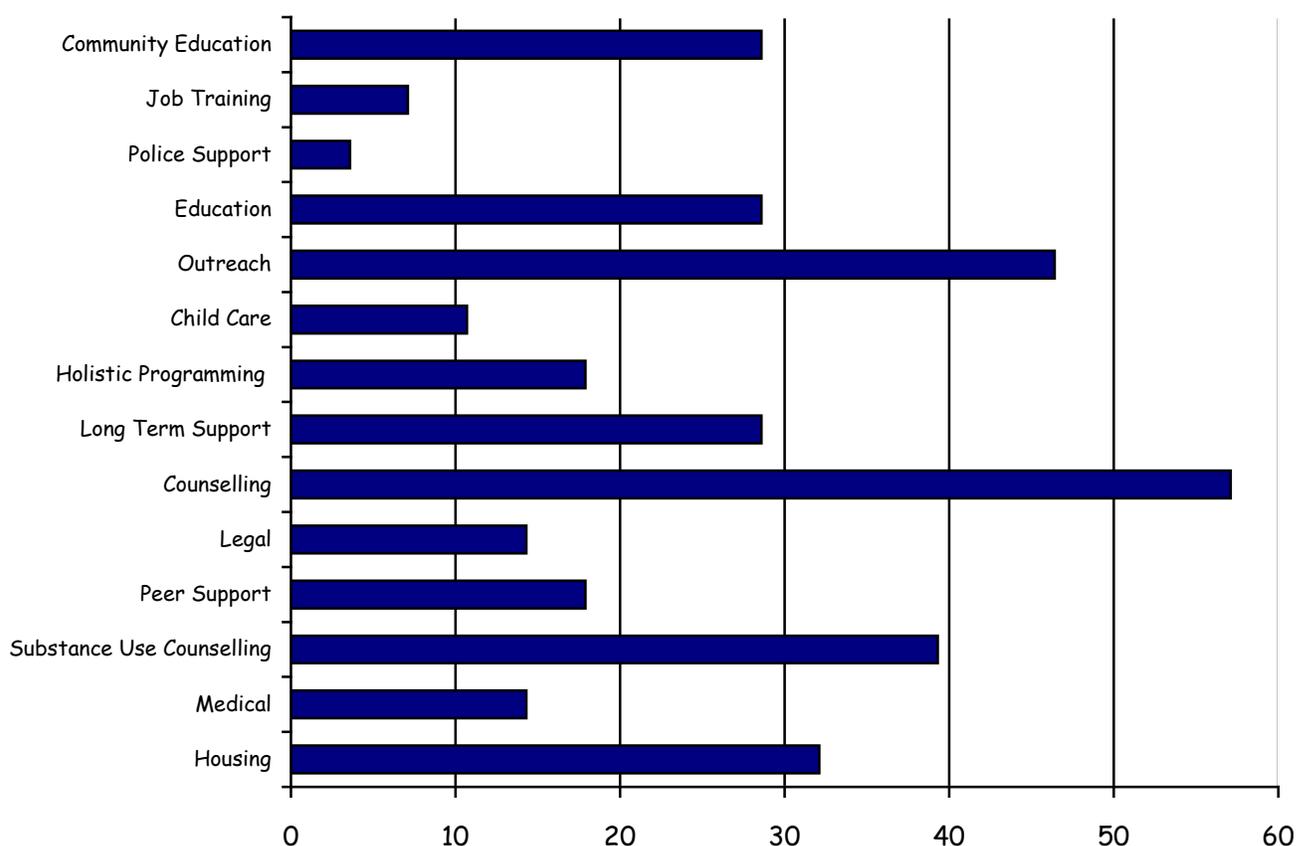
The survey was sent out to 40 community agencies. They were identified through participation in the Barton Street Advisory Committee or the Sex Trade Task Force and through a search on the Inform Hamilton database for agencies referenced through the keywords "women" or "sex trade". Twenty-eight (28) surveys (70%) were returned.

Of the agencies who responded, 22 (78.6%) were aware of sex trade workers accessing their services, while 2 (7.1%) were unsure and 4 (14.3%) said no workers accessed their services. In addition, 2 agencies saw sex trade workers as family, friends and partners of their clients, while 3 additional agencies were unsure if that was the case.

Agencies were asked what general services they provide. This information was used in developing individualized training, and will be available in Phase Three for the development of any resources for sex workers. Some agencies were contacted and resource information has already been sent.

Additionally, agencies that did see sex workers were asked what services these women were accessing. This list was slightly different and was based on the list of services that sex workers identified as wanting to access in Audrey Le Coarer's report for the Elizabeth Fry Society from 1998. The most sought after service, according to the local service providers, was counselling.

Chart 1: Services Accessed



Additionally, agencies mentioned that sex workers accessed assessment, referrals, drop-in services, condoms, needles, food assistance, basic needs, emergency shelter/residential beds (detox), clothing and support/advocacy with OW/ODSP/CAS/CCAS. Ontario Works / Ontario Disability Support Program / Children's Aid Society / Catholic Children's Aid Society.

Agencies were also asked if staff received training on issues of sex work. Five said that they did receive training, 21 said no, and 2 didn't answer. 19 agencies indicated that receiving training would be beneficial for them, 1 said it wouldn't be of use, and 8 didn't answer.

The agencies were provided with a list of topics as developed by the Outreach Worker based on the research conducted, in consultation with sex workers and with members of the Barton Street Advisory Committee.

Most agencies (63%) agreed that a basic Women and Sex Trade 101 would meet the training needs of their staff. Exit strategies and youth prevention were also named as important areas for continued learning.

Other topics that agencies were interested in receiving training about included: cultural considerations including Aboriginal women, stereotypes, nutrition, substance abuse, mental health issues and systemic issues.

5.0 TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The objective in this area was the "Education of Service Providers". The related activity was to "Develop and implement training sessions for service providers in Hamilton working with women in the sex trade." The anticipated outcome was the "creation of an atmosphere in which agencies address barriers to sex trade workers in accessing mainstream services."

In total, 166 people received the broad "Sex Trade 101" training, while 9 received the "Youth and Sex Trade" workshop.

5.1 Sex Trade 101

Research was conducted to determine what types of training would be needed/desired by community agencies. The Advisory Committee developed the initial list, and questions about training composed one page of the survey that was sent out to community agencies. Nineteen of the agencies were interested in one or more of the training topics.

The Outreach Worker also researched existing training programs across North America. Unfortunately many groups were reluctant to share their materials. SOS Hawaii's Youth Prevention program looked excellent and this was purchased to help assist in the development of our program. Information from other sources including movies, books and general research were also used to develop the training course.

The Outreach Worker developed a training module that addresses several areas of concern including basic information, safer sex work, harm reduction, prevention, exits, barriers and resources. This training was tested at an addiction agency for youth called Alternatives For Youth, and 15 of their staff members participated. All indicated that the information would be very helpful for them in their work, and that the training was beneficial. No suggestions for changes were made. The training was presented by Tanya Gulliver, the Barton Street Outreach Worker and the STARS Caseworker from the Elizabeth Fry Society, Jannet Geddes.

Agencies who participated in the survey were asked if they would like a one-to-one training for their staff, and were also offered the opportunity to participate in two large group inter-agency trainings. Most decided that they would like to send the most relevant staff and participate in the larger trainings.

Additionally, the information was distributed widely through the partners on the Advisory Committee as well as through existing email lists (Sex Trade Task Force, Woman Abuse Working Group, Domestic Violence Initiative Community Coordinating Committee).

Two large presentations were held on February 9th and March 2nd. The sessions took place at Mission Services and ran for three hours. There were 61 participants at the two events (19 and 42 respectively) representing over 40 organizations. Guest speakers (former sex trade workers and police officers) were also included as panelists for the presentations. A summary of the presentation is attached in the appendices.

Additionally, Good Shepherd, Catholic Family Services, and the Salvation Army's International Sex Trafficking Committee (Hamilton) asked for training at their organization. 78 people participated in these trainings.

The Outreach Worker was also asked to present at a panel on decriminalization held in May 2004 as part of Elizabeth Fry Week. She made a similar presentation to the Sex Trade Task Force to help them in the development of their Terms of Reference. She also spoke to the staff of the Sexual Assault Centre (12 people), providing them with a combination of decriminalization training and Sex Trade 101, to help them reach consensus as an agency about taking a position on decriminalization.

5.2 Youth and Sex Trade

A separate workshop was developed to deal specifically with youth in the sex trade. It incorporates many of the components of the main Sex Trade 101 workshop. Given that 70% of all adult sex workers began before the age of 18 any training has to include a significant focus on youth.

The Youth workshop however, includes a greater focus on entry, risks and behaviours. It also includes the viewing of the film "Where Did You Sleep Last Night?" from the National Film Board of Canada. The suitability of the film was determined by a preview at the STARS drop-in centre where clients found it relevant to their lives. It was also shown to the Dating Violence Project Youth Advisory Board who found it a little "artsy" but interesting. They felt that it had a good message and would be suitable to show to high school students.

The Youth Training was given to residents of St. Martin's Manor, a Catholic home for pregnant teenagers where 9 residents and staff attended the training. A summary of their evaluations is included.

5.3 Barriers to Service

During the large public training sessions, as well as some of the smaller sessions, discussions were held looking at the barriers to optimal service provision to sex trade

workers. These ranged from lack of funds, lack of knowledge/understanding to difficulties of policies within a particular organization and the legal system.

One of the common themes was a common understanding that in order to provide optimal service there needs to be a stronger investment (by government, funders, corporations, community) in this type of work. Those in attendance stated that they didn't have the ability to provide quality service without knowledge of the issues, and yet for many this was their first opportunity to take part in this type of training.

A list from service providers of the barriers they face in providing service to sex workers is attached.

5.4 Evaluation Results

The results of the evaluations for all of the trainings, with the exception of the youth training, were combined because of the similar nature of the presentations. Because of the very different nature of the training for the Salvation Army and the Sexual Assault Centre evaluations were not conducted. The youth training at St. Martin's Manor was evaluated separately.

In all 92 evaluations were received. Regardless of knowledge level going into the workshop every single respondent indicated that they had improved their understanding of the issues after attending the workshop.

Additionally, the evaluations asked for participants to name areas for further, more in depth training. These included:

- substance use/addictions
- legal process for workers facing conviction
- what causes Johns to act as they do
- more information from police
- HIV & STDs protection and how to protect the sex worker
- Sex trade issues for children under 14
- train the trainer on working with people with sex addictions
- ways to advocate for political change
- ways to meet needs of public for information and support
- videos
- more information on prevention for young adults and children
- what parents can do for their children
- how to support a sex trade worker
- information re: exit paths/strategies (and recognizing signs someone is interested in leaving the trade and how to help)

- abuse
- what is the government doing or planning to do
- socio-economic and political issues & prostitution
- how to talk about sex trade issues with the mental health population
- recruitment of women/children/youth and intervention
- safety planning for women
- specifics of sex trade work
- immigrant and refugee women
- transgender workers
- more information on risk factors
- ways to stop violence against sex workers
- building trust - what is important in helping relationships
- practical support for women in the trade - how can we help?
- more information about resources
- more information about counselling sex trade workers
- better understanding of those who make a choice of it
- trafficking of women

6.0 SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The objective in this area was the "Education of the General Public". The related activity was to "Develop an educational and promotional campaign directed toward the public, with an emphasis on youth, increase understanding and awareness of issues faced by women in the sex trade." The anticipated outcome was the "Fostering of and understanding of issues faced by women in the sex trade among the general public, particularly youth."

6.1 Developing the Message

Research was conducted to find general social marketing campaigns, as well as campaigns that focused on sex trade issues. The Advisory Committee agreed that it wanted something fairly dramatic yet simple; a clear message that would grab someone's attention.

Several brainstorming sessions were held, and the Outreach Worker developed draft posters for some of the ideas. Eventually, one idea was selected that discussed the issues of violence through the use of a fake newspaper ad. Members of the Advisory Committee were highly in support of the concept and helped develop the language.

The ad includes the website and the contact info for the STARS program (since there was at that moment, no further funding for the Barton Street project).

6.2 Focus Groups

The Outreach Worker showed the ad to the women at the STARS drop-in centre and to the youth at St. Martin's Manor. Additionally, the concept was explained to the Sex Trade Task Force members.

Everyone was in support of the concept and found it to be a strong yet simple message.

Some of the comments included:

- Eye-catching
- Helpful for those in need of support
- Informative
- Scary, definitely scary - which is what it should be
- Format is off the wall - not something you see everyday
- Colours are really striking
- Girls are going to look it over and then they'll know there's someone out there wanting to help.

Further responses from the focus groups are attached.

6.3 Poster/Postcards

The poster and postcards are attached in the appendix. They have been distributed to community organizations, particularly those who participated in the training. Members of the Sex Trade Task Force have distributed them through their networks including jails, businesses, neighbourhoods and community agencies.

The poster is being displayed in two bus shelters in Hamilton. The first at the corner of John Street and Main Street East ran from September 26, 2005 through to October 24, 2005. The second poster will be shown at Barton Street and Wentworth Street from November 14, 2005 until December 12, 2005. Starting in December the poster will also be shown on the back of five Hamilton buses for four weeks. The committee is talking about how to get advertising in restaurant and bar washrooms as a potential next step in the social marketing campaign.

6.4 Website

The website www.sextradehelp.ca was selected after consultation with the women at the STARS program and members of the Barton Street advisory. Many options were discussed and this was finally selected as the best option. We wanted to ensure that the name was reflective of the goal (to provide information and services), easy to remember and unlikely to attract unwanted attention from people looking for sex on the internet.

The website was created and developed by the Outreach Worker in consultation with the Advisory Committee. Content was generated and revised through discussions at the monthly meetings. The website includes general education, resources, prevention information and links to services around the world.

7.0 HARM REDUCTION WITH SEX TRADE WORKERS

The objective in this area was the "Education of Sex Trade Workers from a Harm Reduction Perspective". The related activity was to "In consultation with public health services and women involved in the sex trade develop educational programs to reduce harms related to involvement in the sex trade." The anticipated outcome was the "Service providers and sex trade workers will be more aware of and engaged with the harm reduction philosophy."

7.1 The VAN

The Outreach Worker was able to take on two shifts a month with The VAN, a needle exchange mobile distribution program run by Public Health and The AIDS Network. The VAN circulates through the well-known strolls for sex workers from 8 p.m. to midnight Monday to Friday. Staff and volunteers provide both safe sex and safe injection supplies to women working on the street. They also respond to calls for people wanting condoms (often women working as an escort) or clean needles.

Through these shifts, the Outreach Worker was able to connect with many women working on the street. While the contacts were often short in nature, they allowed her to build a familiarity and relationship with many of the women. She was also able to encourage them to attend the STARS drop-in centre run by the Elizabeth Fry Society.

7.2 STARS

The STARS drop-in centre is open from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. It is located at St. Giles Church at Main and Holton Streets. The Outreach Worker attended the drop-in weekly to provide addictions and general counselling. All support was given from a harm reduction perspective. Attendance at the drop-in has varied from no clients to 9 clients on a given evening. About 38 different women attended over the course of the year that the Outreach Worker was at the centre.

The Outreach Worker also assisted the Elizabeth Fry Society in writing a proposal for SCPI funding to relocate the drop-in to Barton Street, and to develop a life skills program, and a Peer Support program. Although the funding was originally denied, it was later granted in the amount of \$91,000. One of the conditions however, was that the drop-in remain in the same location (which isn't completely suitable for the clients to access). The Peer Support program and some life skills training for the clients will be proceeding however. The funding has also allowed for the hiring of a pt addictions counsellor, and has increased the hours of the STARS caseworker to almost full-time.

The Outreach Worker also provided one-on-one counselling in the community for women who were unable to access the STARS drop-in centre.

8.0 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

8.1 Media

The Outreach Worker took part in two television panels for CH TV to discuss the issue of legalization and decriminalization of sex trade, and how it affects women in Hamilton. Members of the Barton Street Advisory Committee were also featured in newspaper articles about the issues of sex trade in Hamilton. A press release was widely distributed for the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers (see below) and one article was published in the Hamilton Spectator.

8.2 International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers

December 17th was the second annual International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. The Barton Street Advisory Committee decided to hold a candlelight vigil to draw attention to the violence (and deaths) experienced by women working on the street.

The event was well attended (about 30 people from all walks of life) and many participants spoke, sharing stories and memories of women who had experienced violence on the streets. The following day there was also an in-depth article in the Hamilton Spectator profiling the event (copy attached).

The day was also used to launch the website www.sextradehelp.ca which is the website designed by the Outreach Worker to provide information about sex work. Stickers were distributed with the message "She is someone's sister, daughter, wife, mother, friend, www.sextradehelp.ca" or "He is someone's brother, son, husband, father, friend, www.sextradehelp.ca". The website was discussed (although not named) in the article.

This event also highlighted the fact that there is still opposition in the community to having sex trade workers present, especially in front of businesses. The manager of the Barton Village BIA is a member of the Advisory Committee, and has actively supported the work of the project. The event was advertised in the Barton Village BIA newsletter, and one member wrote to complain.

His letter said "there are two items of business, embraced and promoted by the BIA that have a negative impact on our street...The second problem is the BIA promotion and endorsement of the Anti Violence vigil for sex trade workers. Our support of this event 'legitimizes' the sex trade workers we are trying to get rid of. The sex trade is illegal therefore these people are criminals. They have choices and if thee street is where they want to be - so be it - but not around my store. I am against violence of any kind but I don't go looking for it but these people do. They attract low lifes that are predisposed to

violence and even deviant sexual behaviour. I think the next newsletter should set the record straight and offer a rebuttal to both of these illegal abhorrent activities taking place on our street. "

8.3 Sex Trade Task Force

The Outreach Worker attended meetings of the Sex Trade Task Force (STTF), and provided administrative assistance to the co-chairs of the committee as needed.

The STTF is a community coalition that includes representatives from a wide variety of agencies (including the police, shelters, frontline service providers and health organizations) who are concerned about the issues facing sex workers. While the main focus is on women working on the street, the taskforce has recently agreed to include the issue of male sex workers as needed. The goals of the task force include education, awareness and advocacy, as well as coordination of service delivery.

Further to recommendation number 1, the Sex Trade Task Force and the Barton Street Community Partners for Crime Prevention joined in 2005 in order to coordinate efforts and decrease duplication. This has been a successful merger with both groups agreeing to a Terms of Reference and ensuring that the committee composition is inclusive.

8.4 Other

When time permitted the Outreach Worker attended meetings of the Woman Abuse Working Group and the Domestic Violence Initiative Community Coordinating Committee to ensure issues of violence against women working in the trade were included on their agendas.

9.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

9.1 Recommendations

1. **To merge the Barton Street Advisory Committee into the Sex Trade Task Force.** Because of the duplication of membership and goals, the two committees feel that it would be best to combine the two groups to reduce duplication and effort. By creating a larger, stronger Advisory Committee the issue of sex workers will be able to be dealt with across Hamilton. Members of the Advisory Committee may decide to form a Downtown Issues sub-group to ensure that the issues of the local Barton Street neighbourhood are not lost.
2. **To hire a coordinator to provide staffing and resources to the Sex Trade Task Force.** The STTF operates through the efforts of staff from community agencies, many of whom are already working to their capacity. In order to help move the agenda forward the STTF needs a coordinator who can provide administrative support, and work to ensure that the goals of the Task Force are implemented.
3. **To develop an educational series on issues of the sex trade in Hamilton.** One of the most consistent responses from the educational seminars was that there was a need for more presentations of this nature. Many ideas for future topics were suggested, and attendees indicated that they thought their colleagues would benefit from the basic 101 training that had been offered. The educational series should also include a strong youth training component, particularly in agencies that serve marginalized youth.
4. **To conduct a needs assessment on the creation of a safe house.** Many people have indicated over the course of this project that they would support the idea of a safe house for women wishing to exit the sex trade. There needs to be a comprehensive review of models, best practises and funding sources. There is a base funding proposal already written (previously submitted to SCPI by the Sex Trade Task Force) and this could be modified with minimal effort.
5. **To reach out to women and men who are working in escort agencies, massage parlours and strip clubs, not just those working at the street level.** All of the work that has been done by the Barton Street project has focussed on women who are working as a street level sex trade worker. There are a large number of women (and men) who are working as strippers, escorts and masseuses. An outreach program needs to be developed to ensure that they are receiving support and information.

6. **To provide educational and outreach support for sex trade workers, in conjunction with the STARS program, and The VAN.** There is a need for ongoing support to people working in the sex trade. It is important that services are not duplicated; therefore there is a need to do work in conjunction with other ongoing programs. There is a need for a drop-in centre in the Barton Street area, and the hours of drop-in need to be expanded from one night a week. Support for the relocation and expansion of the STARS program is critical. The VAN also operates on a limited number of hours and a tight budget. Support through staffing from the Barton Street project was very helpful over the past year and should be continued.

9.2 Conclusion

There is a lot of work to be done in the area of sex trade in Hamilton. While this project has done a lot to bring the issue to the forefront, there are so many women (and men) who work in the trade who are not yet able to access services. In part this is because of a lack of education/awareness about those services, in part its fear of rejection, but the largest issue is that the needed services just aren't there. Not enough is being done to help people who want support, either to exit or while they're in the trade.

While this project primarily focused on women in the sex trade, it was revealed through the work this year that men working in the trade are also in need of support. There are no programs designed to provide services directly to male sex workers. There are also not many youth accessing services and yet given the large number of sex trade workers who started as youth it is important that this population be sought and supported.

Service providers recognize that they need to improve their ability to deliver quality service to this population, and are willing to take steps to access education and training. The number of people and agencies reached through the training was very exciting but is only a first step. At one training it was noted that except for the male police officer presenting there were no men in attendance. It's important to continue the training sessions to ensure that as many staff and as many agencies as possible are reached.

Appendix 1
Literature Review of Best Practices

Appendix 1 – Literature Review of Best Practises

1) Drop-In Centres/Outreach Models

a) “Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE), is located in Vancouver, BC. The PACE mission states: “PACE Society offers non-judgemental alternatives, counselling, advocacy, and empowerment to those in need, susceptible to and exiting the survival sex trade. We work to increase the health, safety and the right of refusal for individuals’ involvement in the survival sex trade. We also work to protect the rights of individual sex workers to work free from harassment, harm and prosecution.”¹

PACE is open to “individuals of all genders...we do not believe we must exclude men to include women and the transgendered.”²

Founded in 1994 PACE provides a variety of services including:

- Individual counselling, referrals, and advocacy.
- Individual support with setting and attaining goals.
- Referrals to support groups.
- One-on-one assistance with education, employment and skills training programs.
- Emergency moves with a police escort when youth are escaping pimps.
- Working with neighbourhoods to identify and implement long-term sustainable strategies to address the impact of the sex-trade on their Community.³

PACE identifies several areas that must be present for successful outreach including: a multifaceted approach, and delivery of service through partnerships; an ability to be fluid and flexible in order to respond to each case in the appropriate manner; utilization of grassroots techniques and strategies; development of a working culture that is reflective of the transitory nature of the street culture and the sex trade; working from an asset based approach; provision of long-term support and building of rapport and relationships.⁴

PACE works with a peer-support model as much as possible, and tries to individualize support services as much as possible including providing “individual counselling, referrals and advocacy; individual support with setting and attaining goals; identifying and mobilizing individual assets...one-on-one assistance with education and employment and skills training programs.”⁵

¹ <http://www.pace-society.ca/>

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

PACE, in conjunction with WISH, another local agency operates a nightly van service that cruises local streets to make connections with sex trade workers. Their services include provision of condoms, needles, water, cookies, coffee etc. as well as an opportunity to talk with a peer-support worker or just take a break from standing outside. The van operates 7 nights a week from 11pm to 6am.⁶

b) The **Women's Information Safe House/WISH Drop-in Centre** currently operates 5 nights a week from 6pm to 930pm. They are facing a funding shortfall and have therefore cut staff resulting in a reduction of hours and days open. The drop-in centre provides a hot meal, showers, access to health care and literacy services. Special programs include Beauty Nights, healing touch and a monthly Safety night.⁷

WISH, originally founded in 1984 as a drop-in for street youth, has the current Mission "to increase the health, safety and well being of women working in the sex trade in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside."⁸

In 1991 WISH was registered as a non-profit society and in 1998 it received charitable status with Revenue Canada.⁹

WISH currently serves an average of 130 women a night up. They operate out of a church basement and pay the church a small honorarium for the use of their facilities. About 60% of their funding comes from private donations, with the remainder of the funding coming from foundations, and a small amount from the City of Vancouver. They have no core funding, and the drop-in program costs about \$135,000 just for staffing and basic operating costs. Their staff are paid \$14/hour, which is fairly minimal given the demands they face.¹⁰

⁶ Personal Communication, Kate, Staff member at WISH, April 14, 2004

⁷ Ibid

⁸ www.wish-vancouver.net

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Personal Communication, Kate, April 14 2004

Ironically, WISH received the VanCity Award last year, a grant of \$1 million, but can't put it to use because of the lack of operational funding.¹¹

It was hoped that the funding would allow WISH to expand their programming to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. While \$350,000 must go into an endowment fund, the other \$750,000 is available to be spent on capital costs including purchase, lease, and/or renovation of a space. WISH applied for SCPI operational funds last year but because they had no matching fund sources their application was denied.¹²

c) Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive

Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive (HIPS) is located in Washington DC and works to help male, female and transgendered sex trade workers. It's mission states, "Utilizing a harm reduction model, HIPS' programs strive to address the impact that HIV/AIDS, STIs, discrimination, poverty, violence and drug use have on the lives of individuals engaging in sex work."¹³

Formed in 1993 by community and police, HIPS provides service to over 100 sex workers a night, and over 8,000 contacts a year. 4,500 of their contacts are with youth under 24. The program operates a mobile (van) outreach program three nights (maybe two - another section notes "Friday and Saturday) a week, 9pm to 5am. There is also a foot patrol, which specifically concentrates on health and HIV prevention with young men on the street.¹⁴

"HIPS staff and volunteers, provide education and counseling, and distribute safety materials, clothing and food to sex workers on the streets. HIPS works to build positive relationships with sex workers on the street through active listening, consistent outreach and unconditional support. HIPS also serves street sex workers through our counselling and referral program which provides services ranging from obtaining a legitimate ID card to finding emergency shelter for young people fleeing abusive relationships."¹⁵

HIPS also offers a 24-hour hotline for those involved in sex work or directly affected by it (i.e. parents of sex trade workers). This hotline is a 1-800 number and is available to anyone in the United States. It is answered by office staff during the day and by a "live answering service after hours", who then contact the on-call staff or volunteer.¹⁶

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ <http://www.hips.org>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

2) Residential Programs

a) The Calgary Dream Centre

One of the newest and most innovative projects for the homeless, the Calgary Dream Centre was officially opened on February 12th 2004. It is modeled after other Dream Centres, including one in Los Angeles, and one in Medicine Hat.¹⁷

A faith-based organization, the Mission of the Dream Centre is to "help people to restore dignity, discover destiny, and realize their dreams. This is accomplished by engaging people in life management skill training, career skills development, spiritual care and integration into society as productive citizens."¹⁸

Residents are carefully selected based upon referrals from other organizations working with the homeless in Calgary. Upon selection into the program they are able to stay in the residence for one year.¹⁹

The Dream Centre operates from a perspective that they call S.H.I.F.T, which integrates five components into creating change in each client's life. These five steps include:

1. "S - Stability for life
2. H - Healing for the soul
3. I - Integrity of character
4. F - Fitness for the body, soul and spirit
5. T - Training for a productive life"²⁰

The Dream Centre is based in a former hotel, which has been renovated to meet the needs of the organization. It now includes 65 rooms on five floors, two general-purpose floors and a parking area. The structure is 56, 565 sq. ft and the property sits on 2.56 acres of land. In addition to housing the Centre also offers: career and life management skills training, on-site post-secondary education electives, community based work programs, and counselling.²¹

In a very quick turnaround the Centre began meetings with local community groups, business and politicians in March of 2002 and had all necessary political approvals by mid-July and development and building permits before the winter of 2002.²²

¹⁷ <http://www.calgarydreamcentre.com>

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

b) New Opportunities for Women (NOW) Canada Society

In Kelowna, British Columbia, New Opportunities for Women (NOW) Canada Society has developed several complementary projects that address shelter and housing needs for women, including those who have been "sexually exploited."

A partnership between NOW Canada, the Real Estate Foundation of BC and Connection Drug Rehabilitation Society has led to the development of a safe house to help "sexually exploited female youth make the break from life on the streets and turn their lives around."²³

According to Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. "The new safe house integrates transitional housing with supportive programs to help female youth leave an environment of drug abuse and sexual exploitation."²⁴

"Young women can live in the safe house for up to a year while they complete NOW Canada's four-month ASK learning program, which teaches life skills and relapse prevention and helps support them in completing Grade 12. Then, residents complete Next Step, an eight-week back to work or school program. In the past year, every one of the ASK graduates have obtained jobs or returned to school. NOW staff and volunteers also help residents set up their own homes, and provide a seven-year follow up program to ensure that the young women sustain their independence. (A federal study found that it takes seven years for people to make a complete lifestyle change.)"²⁵

Previously a rental house was used for this program. The purchase of the new safe house saves almost \$13,000 in rent in the first year that can be redirected to client support. This amount represents almost half of the safe house's annual operating costs. Volunteer live-in directors manage the safe house.²⁶

The total cost to purchase the house, which provides five transitional beds and one emergency bed was \$210,000. "Connection Drug Rehabilitation Society and the Real Estate Foundation of B.C. contributed \$75,000 each towards the purchase of the new safe house. The province, through BC Housing contributed a one-time partnership grant of \$60,000."²⁷

"NOW Canada Society was established in 1998, and operates the only continuum of services for sexually exploited youth in B.C. In Kelowna the society runs a low-barrier homeless shelter for women and children, two safe houses and a 21-unit apartment, subsidized by BC Housing, that offers second-stage housing for low-income women and

²³ http://www.bchousing.org/New/NR_03/n02060401.asp

²⁴ Ibid as cited in press release

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

children and ongoing support and training programs to help participants recover and achieve independence."²⁸

"In addition to the new safe house announced today, the society also operates:

- * NOW Apartments - a 21 unit second-stage apartment building for women who are at risk of homelessness
- * Rotary Centennial Home - a five-bed and one emergency bed transitional housing facility for sexually exploited young women with children
- * Alexandra Gardner Women and Children Safe Centre - a 15-bed, low-barrier homeless shelter for women and children (the only shelter of its kind in the BC Interior)."²⁹

The Rotary Centennial Home opened in April 2003, and also provides short-term transitional housing; in this case the home is open to both young women leaving the sex trade and their children. It also offers five transitional beds, and one emergency bed.³⁰

It is anticipated that eight young women, and 12 children will be able to live in the home on an annual basis. The women and their children can reside in the house for up to one year, while they complete NOW Canada's four-month life skills program and relapse prevention program.³¹

"The provincial government, through BC Housing, is contributing a one-time grant of \$100,000 towards Rotary Centennial House. Kelowna-area Rotary clubs jointly contributed \$80,000, and the society contributed \$14,000, along with funds associated with purchasing the property." The purchase of the house again replaces a previously rented facility, and will save \$16,000 a year in rent, more than half of the operating costs for this home alone.³²

NOW Place Apartments, provide a 21-unit second stage housing facility for "low-income women and children fleeing abusive situations or recovering from sexual exploitation." This project receives an annual operating subsidy from BC Housing.³³

The Alexandra Gardner Centre for Women is a 15-bed shelter facility for women and children also operated by NOW Canada. Liz Gibson, the manager of the facility says, "We're a 15 bed facility - but we're never at 15. We always have a bit more than 15."³⁴

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ http://www.bchousing.org/New/NR_03/n04250301.asp

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Liz Gibson, phone interview, April 13th 2004

According to Ms. Gibson, women in the facility receive a comfort allowance from welfare, and the facility provides all personal hygiene products, as well as three meals a day. Male children up to age 13, and female children of any age are accepted at the shelter.³⁵

Women undergo a full search and seizure when they first arrive. Drugs are confiscated and turned over to the RCMP, alcohol is seized but will be returned upon final exit. Purses and pockets are checked each time women leave and return to the Centre.³⁶

The Centre is operated on a first-come, first served basis, although once registered women are allowed to stay for up to 30 days. Any women who miss curfew or don't return for the night are assumed to have given up their bed.³⁷

There are three full-time, and three part-time staff, who work on a 7am-3pm, 3pm-11pm and 11pm to 7am cycle. Ms. Gibson and her husband live on site; she is available for emergencies and he does the maintenance. In addition to her husband there is one male staff member who does not work the overnight shift, but otherwise is well accepted by the women. "He shows them that there is another side to men and that not all men are bad."³⁸

The minimum qualification for staff is a human service worker diploma. The staff are paid \$17/hr. Ms. Gibson feels that this is on the low side given that nearly everyone who comes to the centre has Hep. C, many have HIV or AIDS, and many are addicted or have mental health issues. However, she notes that the staff who began with the centre are still employed, and that this week was the first time in two years that anyone took sick time. She states that the staff come in and volunteer their time, and work overtime with no expectation of additional payment.³⁹

c) Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation

The Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation developed a "transitional housing project for 15 homeless transgendered and/or female individuals involved with prostitution between the ages of 15 and 30."⁴⁰

The housing facilities are renovated (and relocated) bungalows provided by the Department of National Defence. It is located next to door to an additional housing facility that will house eight individuals from the same client group.⁴¹

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ <http://www.ehtf.ca/projects.asp?pID=40&ContentID=8>

⁴¹ Ibid

The project provides "counselling, support, treatment services, training and employment projects. The goal of the project is to increase the personal safety and well-being of residents and to help them achieve permanent community accommodation."⁴²

Federal funding through SCPI youth was provided in the amount of \$379,393 for operational and programming supports and \$180,218 for capital costs. The sponsor [SCPI] contributed \$559,611 and the total project cost was \$767, 637.⁴³

d) Amisk Housing Association

Another Edmonton based project is that of the Amisk Housing Association, funded as part of the National Urban Aboriginal Strategy. The total project cost \$1, 559, 764 and the sponsor [federal government] contributed \$1, 235, 370.⁴⁴

This money will be used to develop "16 supportive housing units for large Aboriginal families. Amisk Housing Association has received \$320,220 in funding for the purchase of a four-plex and a duplex and \$915,150 in funding to build a 10-unit townhouse facility."⁴⁵

The program also provides support services, which appear to be non-24, residential in nature (likely due to the housing configuration). Instead, Amisk will make regular visit, and provide referrals to other services, and the referring caseworker will also visit as needed to attend to client needs.⁴⁶

e) Genesis House

Genesis House is one of the oldest residential programs for sex trade workers, and one of the largest. It now occupies several different buildings throughout the Chicago area.

"The mission of Genesis House is to offer hospitality to all women caught in the system of prostitution, to provide an environment where they can make a free choice regarding their lifestyle and to assist those who choose to leave prostitution by offering them appropriate services and support."⁴⁷

Genesis House provides a long-term residential program, support services, assessment, referrals and crisis shelter. Women are made aware of the service through their extensive outreach program on the streets and in the courts. "These services qualify Genesis House as the single most visible point of entry for a woman engaged in prostitution to enter the system of social services that will help her exit the violence of the streets

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ <http://www.ehtf.ca/projects.asp?PID=36&ContentID=8>

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ www.geneshouse.org

and end abusive relationships."⁴⁸

Services are offered round the clock, every day of the year. They have three facilities located on the north, west, and south sides of Chicago. The Residential Program offers crisis intervention services to women who are starved, brutalized and ill. "We offer these crisis services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We also offer a 10-15 month residential recovery program for eight women."⁴⁹

Genesis House promotes the "value for money" that the government receives by using a program such as Genesis rather than incarcerating women. "Currently, Chicago deals with these women by incarcerating them. The cost of incarcerating one woman for a year in Cook County Jail is \$26,000. Further, 81% of incarcerated women have children, who must be cared for by the State while she is in jail or prison. The taxpayers' cost for foster care in Illinois is around \$20,000 per child per year. The total cost to the taxpayer of incarceration for a year and taking care of her children will be nearly \$100,000 per year. And at the end of the "rehabilitative" cycle she is nearly guaranteed a place back on the street. In contrast, the cost of a social service residential program - like that offered by Chicago's Genesis House - is around \$21,000. At the completion of her 18 months, she will be reunited with her children in a productive life."⁵⁰

3) Fundraising

a) Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive

Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive created a list of donations needed, and a summary of what cash donations can be purchased (connected with their outreach programme).

"Individual cash donations can be used to pay for outreach costs:

- ***A \$300 donation would cover the cost of a single outreach weekend.*** This covers condom distribution, candy, gasoline for the van, and other necessary materials for outreach.
- ***A \$100 donation would buy a box of Trojan condoms*** that are distributed to nearly 150 prostitutes in one weekend alone.
- ***A \$50 contribution to HIPS would buy enough candy to last us three weeks.*** We distribute candy for women's blood sugar levels because many women are not allowed to eat while they're on the track.
- ***A \$20 donation would allow us to buy the juice and coffee*** that we distribute through the van to people who have been long hours throughout the night.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Ibid

Other contributions to HIPS include:

- Unused beauty supplies for the women on the track. Because few women actually keep the money they make in a night, few can afford to purchase new makeup or hair care products.
- Gift certificates to CVS or local supermarkets would allow us to provide juice and food for those who work the streets for basic survival purposes.
- Clothing! Dig through your closets for clothing that you don't need anymore. Often times, when a woman leaves her pimp, she's lucky if she can leave with the clothes on her back. Also, in the cold winter months, many people are forced to work in the freezing cold for hours at a time.
- HIPS can always use office supplies. Paper, pens, folders, and printer ink are just a few of the items that we always seem to need around the office. HIPS gathers a great deal of information through its outreach and activism. ⁵¹

b) Genesis House

Genesis House also developed a list of services that a cash donation pays for ranging from \$50 all the way up to \$16,000.

"Your tax deductible donation can help get more women off the streets, and provide safety and enhance awareness of a healthy lifestyle among those still on the streets.

- ***\$50 provides bus fare to 33 women*** - Public transportation helps them get to recovery programs, jobs, and doctors.
- ***\$100 pays for a month of peer-facilitated support groups*** - Learning about options helps a woman plan for her recovery.
- ***\$500 provides resources to help one woman over three months' time.*** - You can help lay the foundation for her future by helping her stay clean and sober, enter a job training program and stabilize her home life.
- ***\$1,000 funds the work of one outreach worker for one month.*** - Outreach goes to the where the women are: the streets, shelters and jails, to offer a hand out of the life.
- ***\$5,000 pays for parenting classes, childcare and supervised visitations for a full year.*** - Your donation helps Genesis House residents reclaim their role as mothers and rebuilds healthy and loving relationships with their children and families.
- ***\$16,000 pays for a full year of a complete addiction recovery program.*** - A woman can break free from prostitution, drugs and alcohol and take control of her life.⁵²

⁵¹ <http://www.hips.org/helping.htm>

⁵² www.genesishouse.org

Appendix 2
Barriers to Providing Service

Appendix 2 - Issues Identified as Barriers in Providing Better Services to Sex Workers

Barriers

- Cap on # of sessions (ie for counselling services)
- Catholic - mistaken beliefs/Catholic organisations
- Women would have to identify for it to be known
- Knowledge (of staff)
- Population with family shelters (ie kids exposure to information)
- Confidentiality
- Disclosure fears/Lack of rapport
- Defining sex
- Mainstreaming
- Resources
- Unwillingness to take risks
- Appt basis/times - time of office hours
- Stigma to admit (for clients)
- Duty to report (re CAS)
- Fee
- \$ funding (to improve and expand services)
- system needs to be realistic, educated about multiple factors and community in place to support all factors (particularly for exit programs)
- society doesn't understand
- no long term services
- minimum wage
- Ontario Works/change in income from sex trade work
- Legislation
- Hours of operation (ie VAN is M-F 8-12midnight only)
- Limited counsellors/staff available
- Waiting list for services
- Women don't always report to police
- Staff may have an obligation to disclose information
- Location
- Law
- Judgements
- Agencies don't know each other - clients don't know
- Lack of supports/info at detention centre
- Awareness of services
- Housing
- Lack of men present (at the training session)
- Agency mandate

- Addictions
- Curfews
- Onus on women to make the information known

Ways in which services can be improved

- invest in and understand exit programs
- long term housing
- become more sensitive to issues
- recognize it's a person in front of you
- increase hours for VAN program
- meeting people where they are at
- politics and political scene
- changes in legislation
- agencies learn more about each other
- holistic services
- building trust and relationships
- public awareness
- increase outreach
- increase counselling
- create sex-trade friendly office space
- being able to talk about it even if it is not the primary issue
- speaking in schools
- more things on wall (ie posters in offices)
- improve counselling programs
- more info/keep informed
- resources

Appendix 3
Focus Group Responses to the Poster

Appendix 3 - Focus Group Responses to the Poster

What do you think of the idea/concept?

- I think its excellent
- Eye-catching
- Informative
- Helpful for those in need
- Educational as well
- Scary. Definitely scary. Which is what it should be.
- You go in there with your eyes open.

Would it get your attention?

- Absolutely
- Because of the format, yes
- Format is off the wall - not something you see every day
- Colours are really striking
- Certain words catch your eye in a newspaper
- Eye-catching

What would you think if you saw it in an agency's office?

- I think it would be a good thing. Girls are going to look it over.
- I don't think its "overlookable"
- Then they know someone's out there and wanting to help
- More aware of issues, hopefully they will know what its about

Where would you like to see it?

- Jails
- Homeless shelters
- Telephone poles
- Drop-ins
- Bus stops/shelters
- Schools
- Guidance departments