

ANNUAL REPORT

1999-2000



Mission Statement

The **Separation and Divorce Resource Centre** provides counselling, emotional support, information and referral services for people of all ages affected by separation, divorce, or family re-organization. We assist individuals in recognizing their options and rebuilding their lives.

Board of Directors

President

Tim Schober

Treasurer

Murray Crowther

Secretary

Carolyn Bouck

Directors

Suzanne Bell

Tessa Lloyd

Jill Turner

Mariana Diacu

Neil McKinnon

Staff (year end)

Executive Director

Judith Avery

Manager, Counselling Services

Donna-Rose Law

Manager, Volunteer & Legal Support Services

Pam Rudy

Office Assistant

Raji Goel

Contract Counsellors

Robin Fast

Sylvan Foreman

Susan Grady

Nadine Groves

Trish Hamilton

Melanie Johnson

Ana McGregor

Lionel Zelniker

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President's Report

For 20 years now, the **Separation and Divorce Resource Centre** has provided a unique, indispensable and sought-after service.

As always, we have shown an ability to deliver a high volume of first rate service on a meagre budget. However, demands for our services were high throughout the year, and our staff and volunteers are "maxed out". Simply put, we cannot increase our client load without more people to do the work. Until we get more money, we will not be in a position to make any major changes.

I want to thank our staff, volunteers and board for the work they put into our first Garden Party (a wine and food tasting fund-raiser). It was indeed an "*Affair to Remember*", and we plan on repeating it annually.

Again, let's recognize the contribution of all our hard working team: staff; the dedicated counsellors who provide their expertise in guiding the various counselling programs; and the volunteers who provide office assistance, legal interviewing, family court support, counselling program support and supervision for our access program. Their patience, caring and professionalism are exemplary.

Donna-Rose Law is pursuing more education and has resigned her position as Manager of Counselling. We hope she will be able to devote some time to her work with us, on a part-time basis. We wish her the best with her studies.

There are many individuals and organizations that have assisted the agency through in kind gifts, financial contributions, and ongoing training and legal updates for staff and volunteers. Their support is appreciated and we

would like to acknowledge their contributions.

To each and everyone - thank you.



Board Membership

As always at this time of year we say goodbye to some valued members of the board.

Murray Crowther, our long-serving (if not long suffering) Treasurer, has hit the wall. Under our bylaws, we cannot keep him on the board next year. He has graciously agreed to help from the sidelines. His help is invaluable.

Carolyn Bouck, with a second child on the way, and a change in career path, also was unable to rejoin the board. She too will be sorely missed.

We expect some stellar additions to the Board (including the return of past President Crystal Buchan). Indeed, past board members continue to help us regularly. They are ongoing ambassadors for **Separation and Divorce Resource Centre**.

Finance Committee

As mentioned above, our foray into direct fundraising through the “Affair to Remember” signals our new resolve to raise funds through direct donations rather than relying solely on user fees, contract payments and transfers from charities and foundations.

We are confident of our ability to succeed in raising funds directly. Much as we appreciate our traditional sources of funds, many of those are in a state of relentless decline and we must replace the revenue to keep providing the services.

However, on a slightly more positive note, we can say that funding is stable in the short term.

Funders

We appreciate the confidence expressed in **Separation and Divorce Resource Centre** by our core funders: the Law Foundation, who supports our Legal & Volunteer Services programs; the Attorney General, for support of our Supervised Access Program and Parenting after Separation Workshop; the United Way, BC Gaming Commission, and the Ministry for Children and Families which fund our counselling programs.

I note that the Honourable Andrew Petter, Attorney-General, announced this week that the Parenting After Separation seminar (which we provide under contract to the Ministry) will be mandatory in Victoria.

We expect to combine our fund-raising efforts with tightly focused program development, in a manner which is consistent with our business plan. Our new Board has the skills and enthusiasm to allow us to increase the volume and impact of our services to a community very much in need of those services. Let's go!

Tim Schober, President

Executive Director's Report

As an agency, we slipped into the new century with little fanfare. It has been business as usual. Programs are full; the staff team is strong and working to the max; we continue to provide excellent service in the areas that we do provide. We stay focused and do the best that we can, given the resources at hand. Not bad, but it doesn't feel great or exciting or monumental- as befitting the start of a new century. I'm left wondering, “Is that all there is?”

Over the past year board and staff have felt a sense of frustration as they struggled to balance the need for increased programming and service with status quo funding. Not a new challenge, and it is one that is shared by many organizations. The staff and board too have struggled with the question, “Is that all there is?”

That question has become the challenge for all of us. None of us believes that that is all there is. That challenge has pushed us to commit to making our vision of an access center a reality. What better millennium legacy for Separation & Divorce Resource Centre than a safe place for families to maintain connections while undergoing family reorganization because of separation or divorce.

Over the past year our staff have been very fortunate to participate in some excellent training programs. In the fall Donna Rose Law attended the Step Parent Association Conference. Many of the families that are coming to us for assistance with the separation of the nuclear family are also dealing with issues around the addition of a stepparent. This training, the information gathered, and the contacts made, will be valuable in assisting these families.

In April, thanks to the generosity of some local family law lawyers, Pam and Judith were able to attend the Supervised Visitation Network

Conference held in Vancouver. The United States and the United Kingdom have greater experience and more sophisticated centers. As we develop and move forward with our vision for an access center, we will be able to benefit from their experience.

Through the generosity of the Law Foundation, Judith attended the AFCC Conference in New Orleans. This conference brings together judges, lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists, educators and social workers. It provides access to the leading researchers in the field of Family Law. It takes a full year to digest all the information that comes from this conference!

Pam expanded her job description to include involvement in video making. Through generosity from the Law Foundation the May Street Company made a Family Court video. Pam was involved in editorial suggestions and may be seen in the background in the video. We will use this video as part of an introduction to Family Court.

The addition of computers with network capabilities for all staff members, has allowed us to use time and energy much more efficiently. Again it is through the generosity of the Law Foundation that we were able to do this.

A key client concern is confidentiality. Modern telephone technology allows individuals to decipher who has phoned even though no message was left. **TELUS** has provided the agency with call block at no expense so that our calls are truly anonymous. For clients in abusive relationships, or who have not yet left the relationship, this is extremely important. Thank you **TELUS**.

So in answer to the question "Is that all there is?" Yes! When others have

folded, or cut back service we have maintained status quo and gathered new enthusiasm and commitment. That is cause for celebration!

Judith Avery
Executive Director

Caught in the Middle

Enrolment for the Caught in the Middle program continues to grow. We were able to run a full compliment of three children's groups and two adult groups for both evenings of our spring program. A meeting was held with the Sooke Neighbourhood house to discuss the possibility of running the program in their community. An ongoing and, I believe increasing challenge for the program, are clients who present complex issues while attending group. An increased effort to provide co-facilitators has created a higher ratio of facilitators to children. Through a process of consultation with and a lot of hard work from our facilitators, we continue to find ways of providing the additional support some of our clients need, while maintaining the integrity of our program for all.

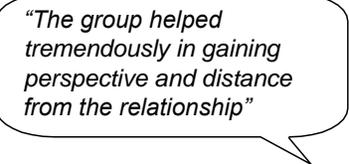
Adult Small Group

Adult Small Group remains a popular program with participation in seven groups throughout the year. As indicated through our follow up process, clients have continued to request extended programs. Several of the groups have exercised the option to have their group extended by three to four weeks on a cost recovery basis. Allowing each group to make that decision independently has added more flexibility to the program.

Donna-Rose Law

Parenting After Separation

171 people attended the workshop sponsored by the Attorney General this year. Feedback from participants is very positive and they feel that it is a



"The group helped tremendously in gaining perspective and distance from the relationship"

great starting place. The workshop focuses on the needs of the children, the parents and the resources available locally to resolve their issues. Numbers were down for this program for this past year as the Ministry withdrew it for a period of five months. In the fall of 2000 this program will become mandatory for any person filing in Family Court in Victoria.

"It (the program) has made a huge difference in the way I deal with the children"

Volunteer & Legal Support Service

There were **480** legal support interviews. Of those, **347(82%)** were with people who were not yet separated, or who had not been involved with lawyers or court to this point. It is encouraging that people in the early stages of separation are finding their way to us for information and emotional support.

Court support continues to take place on family remand days at Victoria Courthouse at least twice a month and Colwood Courthouse once a month. These support days have been good opportunities to share information about Parenting After Separation seminars, Caught in the Middle, and our other programs.

A highlight of the year was participating on the advisory committee for the

production of a new court video, Making Your Case: The Family Court Process. This video was filmed at the Colwood Courthouse in December. It was fun to play myself doing mock support work in the waiting area outside the courtroom.

Supervised Access

We provided **15** families with **477** hours of supervision. This is almost the same as last year given our decision to cap the number of families to **5** at a time.

I would like to take this opportunity to say Thank you to our volunteers. Their

- March 1999 – April 2000
- Kendra Barley
 - Rajan Dhami
 - Eileen Forsyth
 - Marion Gray
 - Karrie Hamilton
 - Claire Hatcher
 - Will Lawson
 - Maggie Lum
 - Sean Malcolm
 - Erick Phillips
 - Christine Reid
 - Cathy Rhodes
 - John Robertson
 - Lauree Sears
 - Temple Sinclair
 - Shannon Springer
 - Denise Wadsworth

help is invaluable to the agency.

Pam Rudy

Financial Position

For the fiscal year April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000

	2000	1999
Revenue		
Law Foundation	\$46,815	\$ 39,158
United Way	22,559	19,261
Bingo	20,461	19,586
Casino	40,000	0
Ministry of the Attorney General	35,089	44,478
Ministry of Children & Families	7,000	7,000
Foundations	0	10,500
Fees & Misc.	23,498	20,930
	<u>\$195,422</u>	<u>\$160,913</u>
Expenses		
Wages and Benefits	\$125,075	\$122,691
Counselling	12,300	13,373
Office and Operating	16,533	16,214
Rent	13,910	12,777
Research/Program Dev.	50	1,719
Audit/Legal	4,929	1,972
	<u>\$172,797</u>	<u>\$168,746</u>
Net Income(Loss)	22,625	(7,833)
Surplus (deficit), beginning of year	\$24,296	\$32,129
Surplus (loss), end of year	<u>\$46,921</u>	<u>\$24,296</u>

FUNDERS

Attorney General

B.C. Gaming Commission



Ministry for Children and
Families (Mental Health)



Our thanks to all who financially supported our organization in the past year.