

ANNUAL REPORT

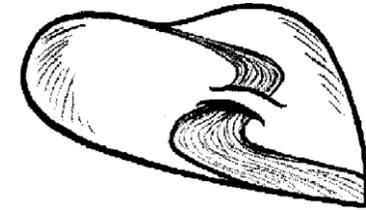
2001-2002

Parental

Legal

Emotional

Financial



**Separation and Divorce
Resource Centre**

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

Suzanne Bell

Directors

Crystal Buchan
Gloria Burima
Mariana Diacu
Robert Haymond

Tessa Lloyd
Gay Pringle
Lex Reynolds
Tim Schober

Jill Turner

Staff (year end)

Executive Director

Judith Avery

Coordinator, Counselling Services, Adults

Donna-Rose Law

Coordinator, Counselling Services, Parents & Children

Jane Taylor Lee

Manager, Volunteer & Legal Support Services

Pam Rudy

Office Assistant

Raji Goel

Contract Counsellors

Eric Chandler
Nadine Groves
Robin Fast
Susan Grady

Trish Hamilton
Tessa Lloyd
Ana McGregor
Lionel Zelniker

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President's Report

It is hard to believe that we have reached the end of another year! As I write this message, I reflect that 2001/2002 has been a year of growth and of change. One of the changes will be the departure of some of our longtime Board members, and growth has occurred as new members join. We would like to thank both Tim Schober, past president of the Board, and Tessa Lloyd. Tim's expertise as a solicitor and as a Personnel Committee member has been invaluable over the years. Tessa has assisted us to broaden our liaison with the schools, to launch our "*Affair to Remember*", and to define policies on reporting abuse and children's programs.

Separation and Divorce Resource Centre

continues to develop and improve in all areas of program development and delivery, and it is an honour and a privilege to serve on the Board of Directors. We have been fortunate to increase our membership on the Board this year, and we are now ten Directors strong. The advantages of a Board this size include the ability to broaden the mandate of the organization, sharing the ideas and enthusiasm of people from a variety of professional areas and backgrounds.

The Board continued its strategic planning process, which began several years ago. In addition to refining our mission statement and vision, the Board has constructed a business plan to see us through the next year, and which will continue to be developed in years to come. The agency's goals and objectives for 2002/2003 are as follows:

1. To be the resource people contact when facing separation, divorce or family re-organization.

- To broaden programs and services
- To make services available closer to home

- To increase the agency's profile
- To broaden community representation on the board

2. To excel at serving our community.

- To support our staff's professional development
- To ensure that our programs and services meet the needs of our community

3. To achieve financial self-sufficiency.

- To review the fee structure on an ongoing basis
- To explore other sources of funding generally
- To generate revenue from our programs and services

As part of our commitment to these goals and objectives, several new initiatives are taking shape. The Board's committee structure now includes a permanent Fundraising Committee, and we have ventured into a completely new arena with a Community Education program. It is our fervent hope that these developments will propel us forward, enabling the agency to keep pace with the changes we encounter – both those we choose, and those which choose us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Directors for their enthusiasm, their commitment, and their community focus. It has been my pleasure to work with them.

Suzanne Bell,
President

Executive Directors Report

What If? That has been a key question this year. What if funding is cut? What if we have to cut back on service provision? What if we are forced to cut staff? In these changing times they are real concerns. When all

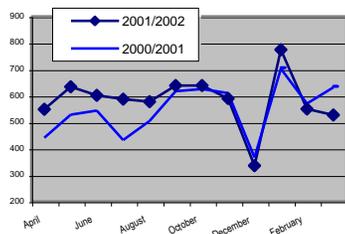
around us is in chaos, it is difficult to stay focused. Much energy can be channeled into the 'what if' scenario. We have the choice to dwell and live in fear, or to carry on and meet the changes when they arrive. **What if** this is the opportunity that the agency has been waiting for?

For years our agency has made a practice of knowing our clientele and listening to their needs. Cost effective program and service have been developed to meet those needs. We have a dedicated and well-qualified team. Case management is easily possible through staff conferencing, allowing us to develop family action plans that utilize all our services. We are ready for

C H A N G E

For the agency there have been many changes this year. Fortunately, to date, we have remained unscathed by funding cuts. However, pending cuts in legal aid are impacting on Legal Support Services with increased clients seeking our assistance. Cuts to other services and the inability to access support makes clients more agitated and emotional, thus taking more counsellor time. Our 1 to 1 support is up considerably.

Incoming Phone Calls



Change occurred at a staff level. In August we welcomed Jane Taylor Lee as Coordinator Counselling Services, Parents and Children. In March Donna-Rose Law returned as the Coordinator Cousenlling Services, Adults. New people always bring new ideas and new focus to services and

that is always appreciated. What has not changed is the dedication and commitment of the staff and I greatly appreciate the balance brought to our team by long-term staff Pam Rudy and Raji Goel.

In late 2000 we received funding from the Capital Health Region to develop programming for families in high conflict. In 2001, Tessa Lloyd developed the Arch Program geared to meet the needs of those families. In 2002 we received funding from the United Way to implement that program. This funding will allow us to increase counselor time and focus more energy on individual families -- changing programs to meet changing client needs.

In September we hosted our 2nd "Affair to Remember" with a good turn out. There were many changes to this event that were positive. The addition of a silent auction did much to boost revenue and add some fun; a string quartet sponsored by an anonymous donor provided special ambiance; and the food, catered by Christine White, a volunteer with the Centre, was superlative. This is not a huge revenue generator but is great for public relations. Many people donated time, energy and prizes to this event. Thank you.

Staff, volunteers and board are to be commended for their efforts to manage change over the past year. It has been trying, but rewarding. Thank you. I especially wish to acknowledge the leadership of Suzanne Bell who is leaving the board. She was instrumental in establishing our strategic plan. I look forward to her return in the future.

C H A N G E

will be the key word for the next year.

Let us accept
Challenge and
Hope that opportunities will come. It will be an
Adventure that will provide
New and novel approaches that will reap
Good gains for clients, staff and agency.
Embrace change and make it a +++ experience!

Judith Avery
 Executive Director

Children & Parent Support

The **Caught in the Middle Program** continues to provide a high standard of skill building and support to children and parents whose lives have been affected by separation and divorce.

This year **377** intakes resulted in **229** participants, down from last year. It is important to note the increasing number of children, who are not appropriate for group, because of marked behavioural and emotional problems. This has resulted in significant change for the agency. It has increased demand for children and parenting support. We have expanded the 1 to 1 counselling to meet this demand.

We applied for and have received money to look at the needs of high conflict families and to develop programming that would be better supportive of these families .

Our goal for next year is to review the core for the Caught in the Middle program so that we many continue to provide a superlative program that will assist, support and enrich the lives of our clients.

Much effort has been expended in increasing the number of facilitators. We continue to attract individuals with

high skill sets and a profound commitment to this program. I wish to thank all our facilitators and co-facilitators, without whom, this program's success, would not be possible.

Jane Taylor Lee
 Co-ordinator, Counselling Services
 Parents and Children

Adult Counselling Services

Group members are taking advantage of the option to extend the length of their groups. We had six 8-week groups this year, four of those continued with extentions of 2 to 4 weeks and two groups opted for a second extension of 4 weeks! Obviously people are enjoying the personal growth, and fellowship that is part of the group process. After much searching and consideration we have adopted the new name, "Evolutions", for our Adult Small Group. We believe this name is more descriptive of the positive healing process that our group members experience.

One of our greatest challenges in meeting the needs of individuals who seek out our services is a sometimes lengthy wait between groups. We have been offering more 1 to 1 emotional support in order to meet their needs. We plan to offer a new 4-week introductory group for our clients. This group will appeal to a wide range of clients:

- those waiting for the next 8-week group (Evolutions) to commence
- those who may find the time commitment and/or the cost of the 8-week program a barrier to participating, and
- those who might be a bit hesitant to engage in a more involved group process yet want to learn some of the coping strategies and skills involved in rebuilding their lives.

My child didn't take the program but I have noticed a change in her behaviour as a result of a change in mine

My child is more talkative, clear, calmer, and articulate.

We have also ventured into the world of step-parenting, a long recognized area of need for our clients. This year we ran one Step Mom's group and one Step Parents' Group. Numbers were small but programs were met with great enthusiasm and there has been a continued request from our clientele to offer information and support in this area. Step families have identified barriers to attending group as cost, time commitment, and the lack of daycare. This summer I will be working with the feedback from the original Step-Parenting program to create education and support models for the step-parents that can be taken successively or individually. We will also be working as an agency to come up with some creative ways of providing some limited daycare for these workshops.

Donna-Rose Law
Co-ordinator, Counselling Services
Adults

Parenting After Separation

398 people attended the workshop sponsored by the Ministry of Attorney General this year. Response continues to be very positive from attendees.

Legal Support Services

This year saw a greater involvement in supporting clients through Family and Supreme Court proceedings. I attended the New Civil Chambers Rules course in June 2001. That training has been invaluable considering the number of clients who needed to vary existing orders that originated in Supreme Court.

We approached more clients (**441**) at Victoria and Western Communities courthouses this year. (366 last year)

Feedback about our court support services from clients and volunteers has been fantastic. A court volunteer who accompanied a client during her maintenance hearing at family court said:

"I stayed with R throughout, including making sure her ex was out of sight. She remained calm and cool throughout the questioning.....The ex said he would sue for custody. He thought that would delay any payment. The judge ordered an interim amount until custody was sorted out. R was delighted with the outcome. She did really well and thanked me for my help. It's times like that when I love being a volunteer."

A client varying maintenance at supreme court sent a thank you card

and letter saying:

"The moment I walked into this Centre, I was treated with respect and compassion ...Without the support I received, I wouldn't have had the courage and positive attitude...to stand in front of a judge...I believe this service is absolutely an essential service. I couldn't have done it without you."

There were **464** clients for legal support interviews

Office assistance was provided by **10** volunteers who contributed **445** hours by doing a myriad of small office duties essential to our functioning

Volunteers	
Office/Computer	
Robyn Ashton	Cathy Rhodes
Angela Dobie	Eddie Twardoz
Tiffany King	Karen Souza
Maggie Lum	Kelly Starchuk
Leah Melnyk	Mel Klassen
Access	
Lisa Cole	Denise Wadsworth
Claudette Sells	
Court	
Michelle Audet	Angie Holland
Deborah Chamitoff	Jim Spencer
Carol Anne Collins	
Support Interviews	
Jo-Anne Long	Christine White
Bingo/Special Events	
Kendra Maree	John Robertson

Facilitated Access:

This year:

- **15** families were in the program, given a total of **445** hours of supervision.

There were fewer hours this year as a result of court orders for 3 families specifying visits for 1 – 2 hours, instead of the regular 3 hour visits. We have also facilitated an increasing number of Facilitated Transfers.

I had eleven opportunities to speak to the community in a variety of venues, including the courthouse library, Law Centre seminars, Family Maintenance

Workers' office and Collaborative Family Law meeting.

Without question, the challenges of assisting families through separation/divorce are great. Rewards come via feedback that we are creating a positive difference in many lives. A former client who became a volunteer illustrates this positive difference:

"I was very well received when I made the first phone call and because of this reception I am inspired to be more involved in this community."

Pam Rudy, Manager
Volunteer & Legal Support

FUNDERS

Attorney General

B.C. Gaming Commission

Ministry of Children and
Family Development



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