

# ANNUAL REPORT

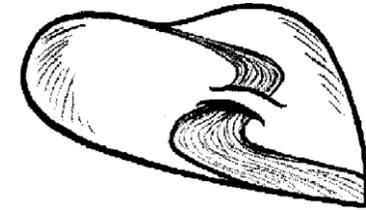
**2002-2003**

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.

**April 1, 2002 – March 31, 2003**

**Board of Directors**

**President**

Mariana Diacu

**Directors**

Crystal Buchan	Marilyn Miller
Gloria Burima (until October 2002)	Gay Pringle
Dyan Davison	Lex Reynolds
Ken Harper	Avi Tal
Robert Haymond	Jill Turner

**Staff**

**Acting Executive Director(as of January 2003)**

Pam Rudy

**(Former)Executive Director**

Judith Avery

**Manager, Volunteer & Legal Support Services**

Pam Rudy

**Coordinator, Counselling Services, Parents & Children**

Jane Taylor Lee

**Coordinator, Counselling Services, Adults(until March 2003)**

Donnarose Law

**Coordinator, Supervised Access(as of November 2002)**

Claudette Sells

**Office Assistant**

Raji Goel

**Contract Counsellors**

Robin Fast	Tessa Lloyd
Dorina Germinario	Jo-Anne Long
Susan Grady	Ana McGregor
Patricia Hamilton	Lionel Zelniker
Helen Lennie	
Marie-Christine White (Legal Support)	
Angela Reid (Office Support)	

**Separation and Divorce Resource Centre**

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## President's Report

The Year 2002 to 2003 was a tumultuous one for Separation and Divorce Resource Centre, however, I have been privileged to serve as President with the support of an excellent team of Board members and a dedicated and loyal team of staff members and volunteers.

This year's challenges came from all corners: government cuts to funding for services which increased the number of clients served by the agency without a corresponding increase of government grants; oversight in enforcing internal procedures which led to the agency being struck off the register and having to be reinstated; the resignation of the Executive Director for personal reasons and an Acting Executive Director stepping in to carry the load; and receiving notice for the termination of lease.

The Board, staff members, and volunteers rose to the challenge. I can report now that funding has been secured for core programs and services we provide, the agency is registered as a society with the Registrar of Companies, the acting Executive Director has done an outstanding job and a new lease is secured starting June 1, 2003.

Our funders offered us their strong support throughout the year and remained confident in our abilities to deliver services despite all challenges. In particular, we appreciate the special efforts made by the Law Foundation, for their commitment to continue the funding of our Volunteer and Legal Support Program. In addition, the Law Foundation granted the agency a one time \$3,938 grant for reviewing the volunteer component of our legal support services and making recommendations on any changes as to how volunteers can best be utilized, given the legal aid and court services changes affecting family law services in Victoria at this time.

Also, we appreciate the support received from the Ministry of Attorney General for providing funding for the Supervised Access program and Parenting After Separation seminar; the United Way, the Ministry of Children and Families Development and the BC Gaming Commission for funding the counselling programs.

This year we welcomed new Board members; Marilyn Miller – a social worker, Dyan Davison – a lawyer, Avi Tal – a mediator and Ken Harper – vice principal at Lakehill Elementary School. They rejuvenated the Board, brought in new ideas and plenty of enthusiasm. In addition, Pam Rudy, the Acting Executive Director, has been able to effectively liaise with the Board, with staff members and is credited with doing the ground work in the implementation of the toughest decisions made by the Board. She worked long hours, relentlessly in pursuit of the well-being of the agency. Past Board members came to the rescue and we would like to thank Tim Schober, Suzanne Bell and Murray Crowther for their continuous support of the agency.

Regretfully, Gloria Burima – from the Board, and Judith Avery – the Executive Director, had to resign for personal reasons. We would like to thank both for past services and wish them well in the future.

The new Board team was hard at work from the very beginning. Through a series of public education presentations, the agency was kept in the public eye as the place for assisting individuals in recognizing their options and rebuilding their lives following separation, divorce or family reorganization. The Education Committee organized the following presentations: *The effects of Divorce on Children, Parental Alienation, and Living in a Step-Family*. Also, Judith Avery's *From Sparring partner to Parenting Partner* article was published

in the Island Parent magazine and was received well by the community.

The Personnel Committee has done an outstanding job at reviewing the Board's procedures and dealing with legal issues affecting the agency. The committee has also started the selection process for a new Co-Executive Director of the agency. Through the Fundraising Committee a new initiative for off-setting costs of the Caught in the Middle program was developed. This resulted in a successful bottle drive where participants in the program collected bottles and were treated on the last day to hotdogs donated by Thrifty's.

We would like to also express our appreciation to staff members, who have all volunteered many hours and weekends to carry out work for the agency. They efficiently administered the day-to-day work, provided services on behalf of the agency and assisted the board in carrying out its responsibilities.

A big thank you to Raji Goel, who provided continued administrative and technical support for the agency. Also, for all their hard work as coordinators of our counselling programs, we thank Donnarose Law who leaves us for personal reasons and Jane Taylor Lee, who is going on maternity leave. We hope that they will join our team again, in future.

Mariana Diacu

### Acting Executive Director's Report

It is with mixed emotion that I find myself writing this annual report. When Judith suddenly took medical leave in January and subsequently resigned in March, I was struck by the following "prophetic" words that Judith had used in her previous year's annual report: "C H A N G E will be the key word for the next year."

There has been a whirlwind of change and adjustment. In spite of it all, there have been many accomplishments.

Over the past five months we applied for and received the following core funding for next fiscal year:

-Law Foundation of BC .....	40,600
-Ministry of Attorney General (2 grants) .....	28,205
-United Way .....	22,000
-Ministry for Children & Family Development .....	7,000
-Capital Health Region Community Fund .....	1,000 (top up from former grant)
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$98,805</b>

There was also unexpected revenue in the form of GST rebates for the past four years (totalling \$1,760) that had never been applied for.

Audits were completed by Blain Allen Inc. Chartered Accountants for the fiscal years 2000 and 2001

Procedures for reinstating our society status were quickly and successfully implemented.

A training session on the topic of Family Violence was held for *Parenting After Separation* facilitators and staff.

Agency presentations were made at the Law School and to Child Care Support Services. Jane Taylor Lee and I were joint presenters at the latter which was attended by approx. 75 child care providers.

Formal approval was given by the Board to have dedicated space for one office at the new West Shore family-serving facility when it is built over the next two years.

A search for new office space was begun. We found an excellent site and began negotiating the lease.

Changes in gaming regulations resulted in the closure of 711 bingo hall, of which we were affiliated with. Thank you to Kendra Maree who volunteered for 10 years as our Charity Representative until it closed in October 2002.

Board members, both current and past, have strongly supported me and the other staff through the difficult times. I

would like to thank Mariana and Crystal for working overtime to assist with grant proposals. I also want to acknowledge the tremendous assistance I received from staff-member, Jane who provided many hours of proposal writing/editing time and emotional support. For Raji's faithful presence and ability to turn unattractive proposal drafts into pleasing visuals in mere minutes, I am extremely grateful.

Special acknowledgement & recognition are also due to Raymonde Vachon who worked tirelessly behind the scenes on getting our financial affairs in order for Canada Customs and Revenue, Agency, and our audits.

The future looks promising. There is a positive feeling in moving to our new premises. Fall 2003 marks our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It's time for a well-deserved celebration!

#### **Volunteer & Legal Support Services**

The year began with various networking and agency presentation opportunities that included public legal education seminars, Rainbows grief support program, Volunteer Victoria focus group, meetings with family law lawyers at their offices, and a collaborative family law group meeting.

In October, the Law Foundation gave us \$3,938 in additional funding to do research and evaluation of our volunteer and legal support services. While I started working almost full time on this project, Claudette Sells was hired to take over the Supervised Access Program from my portfolio. Claudette had been a supervised access volunteer with us for the previous two years. We were fortunate she was interested and available to fulfill the position.

In November, I attended a 3-day Advocacy Training Conference in Richmond, sponsored by the Law Foundation of BC and Legal Services Society.

This conference provided a great opportunity to meet and work with a diverse group of people who help individuals facing disadvantages in navigating through various legal issues.

In early January, Judith had to take an unexpected medical leave of absence. Juggling my responsibilities as Manager of Volunteer and Legal Support Services as well as those of Acting Executive Director became a huge challenge. The Law Foundation gave us permission to put the research on volunteer and legal support services on hold temporarily. Fortunately, most of the client interviews for legal support were capably managed by long-term volunteer Marie-Christine White. Clients have continuously given positive feedback about her warmth and genuine caring. One client summed it up when she said:

*"I came for legal support, but I came away with a lot more."*

There were **494** legal support interviews during the fiscal year, a 16% increase from the previous year.

The increase is mainly in the area of court preparation. We suspect that legal aid cutbacks have resulted in the increase of court-related referrals, particularly for those in the process of varying supreme court orders.

A new experience over this past year has been attending several family case conferences at the request of clients wanting emotional support, especially when the clients were unrepresented by counsel.

Demographic information has shown that parenting arrangements are more complex, reflecting the reality of re-constructed families. We have also

<b>Volunteers</b>	
<b>Office/Computer</b>	
Angela Dobie	Sylvan Foreman
Mel Klassen	Angela Reid
Ryan Vetter	Marie-Christine White
<b>Court</b>	
Deborah Chamitoff	Carol Ann Collins
<b>Bingo</b>	
Kendra Maree	

noticed an increase in the number of parents who indicate that they have never been in a co-habitation relationship with the other parent.

To provide better services to our culturally diverse community, I attended workshops in February and March on the topics: *Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity* and *Responding to Incidents of Racism and Hate*.

In March, the Family Duty Counsel Project began at both Victoria and Western Communities provincial courts. While providing emotional support and information to clients waiting for their first court appearances, we now had the option of referring them to speak to duty counsel to address questions beyond the scope of our legal support services. There were **386** clients that we served and supported at court during the year

Volunteer acknowledgements and heartfelt thanks are due to Deborah Chamitoff, Carol Ann Collins, and Angela Reid who provided court support. Office support was provided by Angela Reid, Ryan Vetter, and Sylvan Foreman. Angela alone has provided us with countless hours of her time. She has come into the office almost every working day since she began volunteering in October!

Even though there were stressful events and changes since January, I am pleased that we were still able to offer clients a full range of legal support services. In light of legal aid changes, increased court-related referrals, and the duty counsel project, I am looking forward to take on the challenge of developing our legal support services to

complement the work already being done.

**Facilitated Access**

Two major changes have occurred since last year. Claudette Sells, a long term volunteer was hired in November to coordinate the program while Pam was “seconded” to review our Volunteer and Legal Support Program.

Our contract with the Attorney General also changed, requiring that referrals to our program could only be made through the Family Justice Centre.

There were 450 hours of supervision for 14 families in our program. With Claudette’s assistance, one of the families was able to move into facilitated transfers. Claudette has indicated that two of the fathers have expressed their initial nervousness at being supervised, but that they felt she quickly helped them overcome their anxiety. The children have all responded well to Claudette’s personality. We have been very fortunate to have Claudette available during the unusual hours that this program demands.

Pam Rudy

**Parenting After Separation**

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

Interesting to note is that when clients are filing applications in court regarding the children – we are seeing grandparents and other family members having to take this program as a result of this rule.

**Audited Financial Statements**

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Ministry of Attorney General	\$ 44,680	\$ 44,964
Law Foundation	41,980	47,253
Fees & Miscellaneous	30,400	30,420
United Way	22,208	23,792

Bingo	20,263	21,937
Ministry for Children and Families	7,000	7,000
Casino	--	25,000
Ministry of Health	--	9,000
	<b>166,531</b>	<b>209,366</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries & benefits	127,980	121,645
Counselling	23,106	22,457
Rent	13,147	15,313
Office & administration	10,801	8,983
Professional Fees	4,011	4,961
Telephone	3,342	3,402
Insurance	2,651	2,500
Bookkeeping	2,500	--
Amortization	1,552	2,273
Printing	806	2,420
Training & Travel	293	4,324
	<b>190,189</b>	<b>188,283</b>
<b>Surplus(Loss)</b>	<b>(23,658)</b>	<b>21,083</b>
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	<b>44,346</b>	<b>68,004</b>

### Adult Counselling Services

Over the past year, 295 individuals contacted us for emotional support and our workshops. Participation in our Evolutions (previously called Adult Small Group), has been steady and were well attended. Our facilitators, Lionel Zelniker, and Susan Grady, received very positive feedback and arranged for two 4-week extensions. In order to alleviate some of the stress of individuals waiting for the start of the next Evolutions group, we have been able to offer them more one-to-one emotional support sessions.

There is continued interest in expanding support groups for blended families. Donnarose facilitated another Step-by-Step group and we are keeping a wait-list for interested people.

Unfortunately, Donnarose ended her employment with us as Coordinator, in March. I am looking forward to taking over some of her duties at the beginning of April.

Jürgen Jung

### Children & Parent Support

Another year of interesting demands on the centre's facilitators and services. We provided **244** parent emotional support and **241** children individual counselling sessions. We have witnessed an increased demand for 1-1 counselling as many children present with significant emotional, psychological

and behavioural challenges which exclude them from the group environment provided by Caught in the Middle.

Program development remains a priority, yet finding time to research, design and implement new material to enrich the current program continues to present it's challenges. We recognize the need to enrich programs, yet we are faced with ever changing demands from our clients and the community.

We continue to enjoy tremendous support from mental health professionals, local agencies, lawyers, physicians, and schools and endeavor to incorporate their feedback into our comprehensive services. I'd like to thank our facilitators, office staff, and board of directors for their encouragement and efforts in making this year another succesful one.

A special thank you to Nadine Groves, a masters level University of Victoria student who provided 80 hours to doing intakes for parents and children for Caught in the Middle and individual counselling to children. Thank you for your support and commitment to our clients and our services.

I have enjoyed the challenges here and look forward to the new challenges of being a new mom, as I am expecting my first child in May.

Jane Taylor Lee

## FUNDERS



Ministry of 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.*