



Domestic Abuse Services

www.domesticabuseservices.ca

13th Annual General Meeting

Inside this issue:

13 th Annual General Meeting	1
President's Report	1
Together, We Can	2
Giving Tree of Hope	2
Educating Our Seminarians	3
Anti-Violence Workshop	3
Volunteer Training	4
Carolling for Eva	4
Donation Form	4

Michele Smillie, President of DAS, welcomed members and guests to the AGM held at St. Patrick's Parish, on January 21, 2009, in Vancouver. Michele thanked and introduced the current DAS Board Members.

Financial Statements and Budget for the upcoming year were presented by Treasurer, Gloria Lowe, who announced that a 'Foundation' had granted all the necessary money needed to refurbish Eva's House. It was reported that 40 CWL Councils contributed at least once, with some councils donating numerous times throughout 2008. CWL Liaison, Pat Battensby, shared various and innovative ways councils have raised funds for the 'Wish List' of items needed for Eva's House, noting the need is greater now with the opening of Eva's House. Pat reported that the 'Pennies' collection over the years has raised about \$6000 and the purchase of Pathway to Hope Bricks continues to support

victims of domestic abuse. The Micallef family was unable to attend the AGM and sent a message along with their annual donation. Their letter read;

"This donation is in memory of our dearest Aunt Margaret (Micallef) who was committed to the development of Our Lady of Good Counsel Society (DAS) and given in the same spirit as she taught the Micallef family ~ a true philanthropist, giving from her heart."

Guest Speaker for the evening was Brian Norton, Founder and Executive Director, Christian Advocacy Society. This society is a non-profit, volunteer organization that provides five community outreaches in Greater Vancouver. Brian is also one of the founders of Focus on Life. Brian shared with us some experiences encountered with the start up and ongoing operation of their safe house and how it is run in a Christian manner. Problems were shared and Brian advised that some problems would be the

same for us. Their mandate is to 'not kill marriages, but to alter behaviour' and that prayer is a huge part of the safe house operation, both in praying on behalf of and with the victims.

Fr. Vincent Hawkswell, DAS Spiritual Advisor, remarked that this has been a very trying year, especially for our president, Michele - in deciding to purchase our house and to be operating with minimal board members. Father thanked Michele personally and on behalf of all members. He called the Society, 'the CWL baby' and asked that we 'don't let the baby suffer'.

The evening ended with the wonderful hospitality of St. Patrick's CWL and all left inspired to stay focused and to celebrate the opening of Eva's House, a safe haven for our victims and their families.

Ann Dobie

Domestic Abuse Services- Our Lady of Good Counsel Society

A non-profit, volunteer organization supporting victims of abuse and violence

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President's Report

*"Peace be with this house and with all who live here"
Book of Blessings.*

As Fr. Hawkswell sprinkled Holy Water in each room, closet and corner, around the front and back of the property, and every part of Eva's House, he said the above words of blessing. That is what we want most for our clients - to live in peace, in a world not

fraught with violence and fear, but a world of peace and joy.

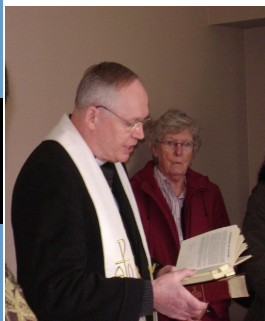
It was a happy and blessed day, when on February 28, the Board of Domestic Abuse Services and a few friends of the Society gathered together to bless Eva's House. The renovations have been completed (except for some work on the outside of the property) and the rooms are

starting to take shape with donated furnishing from all our wonderful and generous supporters.

As we sat in the living room of one of the units, we prayed a decade of the Rosary to entrust this house and all its occupants to our Blessed Mother. We

Continued on pg 2

President's Report *continued*



then gathered around a *new* kitchen table in celebration of the completion of one of the dreams of the original founders of DAS who met many years ago around another kitchen table with an idea and a dream.

As we move ahead with this project, we are still in need of the little things that make a house a home. We have most of the large pieces of furniture and now are looking for household items such as pots and pans, lamps, bedside tables, clocks, towels, sheets, etc. I wish I could take you all to see what you have done, but we need to be very careful of the security



Together, We Can

Eva's House is completely renovated. It is a warm, near-new, comfortable and inviting home for four families who can start rebuilding their lives without fear. There are still a few items that we need. Diane Chua, who has been absolutely invaluable in getting Eva's House up and running, has been busy with all

and confidentiality of Eva's House. I have enclosed some pictures here so that you could get a general idea of what it looks like.

The Board of DAS is working hard in other areas of education and training. We are also looking for new board members in the positions of: Secretary (taking board minutes and keeping records), Communications (getting our message out to our members as well as the Catholic community), and Fundraising (looking for new and innovative ways of increasing donations). We also need bright and committed people to continue the growth of the Society,

volunteers on our help-line and regional resource workers. There are also new volunteer opportunities at Eva's House to help with maintenance and small projects that always need doing around a house.

We couldn't have done it without all of you. Through your prayers, good wishes and generous support, we are now able to help women and children break the cycle of violence and begin the healing process in a wonderful new environment.

Michele Smillie, President



the details one must tend to when equipping four homes. If you can help supply the other items that are needed, please email Diane at: domesticabuseservices@gmail.com

We would like to thank the 'foundation' that donated a huge sum of money to cover most of the renovations, our regular support-

ers, and all those who organized various fundraising events and raised awareness ... for you have helped make Eva's house a reality.

Acquiring the house is another major goal reached but is only the beginning of the commitment that

Continued next page

Giving Tree Of Hope

The *Giving Tree of Hope* was started by the ladies of the Catholic Women's League at Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Burnaby/New Westminster approximately 10 years ago. Each year at the beginning of Advent, we set up our little tree in the foyer of the Church for everyone to see as they enter. Initially we sought donations of undergarments, food items, toiletries, scarves, toques and gloves for the young people who sought the services of Covenant House in Vancouver. We then extended our donations to include Sancta Maria House. This year we wanted to find a more "needy" recipient and were pleased to bring the good works of Domestic Abuse Services -

OLGCS to the attention of our parishioners.

We decorated the tree in white envelopes printed with a write-up about DAS and a place for people to write their name and address. Each envelope was attached to the tree by a red ribbon. I addressed the congregation at the Masses during the first week of Advent, introducing DAS-OLGCS, and talked about how domestic abuse affects us all in one way or another, the need for DAS in our society and their need for financial support. The parishioners were asked to take an envelope from the tree, put their donation in the envelope, and complete and return the envelope to me (or put it in the

collection for forwarding to me). It was all very easy, and another way of letting silent victims know that there is help out there (and at their fingertips). I also inserted different announcements about DAS in the bulletin for each of the week-ends during Advent.

I am very pleased to tell you that through the wonderful generosity of Our Lady of Mercy parishioners and our CWL members, we raised \$1,850 for Domestic Abuse Services.

**Janet Kilby, Past-President
Our Lady of Mercy, CWL**



Educating Our Seminarians

March 2, 2009 became a very significant milestone in DAS' history as the education part of our twofold mission—to provide direct services and to educate the community—reached out to the hills in Mission. At the 2008 AGM, our keynote speaker and shepherd of the Vancouver Archdiocese, Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, requested that DAS reach out to our future priests at Christ the King Seminary to make them aware of the Church's teachings on domestic abuse and violence, what the warning signs are, the real reasons behind such behavior, how to respond to Catholics who become victims, and what resources are available to

them.

Twenty-two seminarians, together with Fr. Mark and Fr. Alban, attended the two hour workshop presented by members of our Education Committee and by Fr. Hawkswell, our DAS chaplain. His real-life examples of domestic conflicts and abuse, together with a very powerful testimony given by a 'survivor' of domestic violence, impacted the seminarians powerfully.

Some comments received were:-
"..it will help me be more sensitive and compassionate to the abused"
"Understanding the cycle of abuse will help me apply prudential

judgment and proper counseling"
"..the workshop has helped reinforce the legitimacy of this topic in my mind"

"I have become more aware of the varieties of abuse, of its roots and of resources that are available"
"...this a real issue, not to be brushed away under a rug"
"..given me some idea on how to respond to disclosures...it is important for a priest to respond properly and with prudence..."

Helen Low
DAS Education Chair



Shopping Tote \$8
 These 24L bags are made from recycled materials and have the DAS logo. They are great for packing groceries and other items.



Snowflake Ornament \$10

Something sparkly for your Christmas Tree that will also help victims of violence. This snowflake ornament comes in its own box.

All profit goes to DAS for Eva's House.

Together, We Can *continued*

is necessary to maintain a safe house. As we begin to accept families, we will seek support in the way of a month's hydro/gas bill for these homes. We will launch this program as soon as we can determine the cost involved.

If you are attending the diocesan convention, please visit our DAS

table. We have some brand new items for fundraising that are absolutely irresistible.

We badly need Board members. You may think you do not have the qualifications but in reality, you are blessed with a special talent that DAS needs. If you can help, please call me at 604-926-4294 or email at

pwbatts@telus.net.

May you and your families enjoy the beautiful Tridium that leads up to Easter. I think it is the most meaningful time in our church.

Pat Battensby,
CWL Liaison

Anti-Violence Workshop

On February 24, in cooperation with school counselor Virginia Eckert, DAS held an anti-violence workshop for 100 Gr. 10 students at Saint Patrick's Secondary School.

The day began with a talk from Sister Nancy Brown from Covenant House. She explained the different kinds of abuse, how these situations can arise, and gave examples of warning signs that could lead to violence in a relationship. She made it clear to the students that "we are all 100% responsible for our own actions." Her talk seemed to really impact the students.

Next, the Saint Patrick's peer counselors put on skits of abusive relationships that all students in

the room could relate to. This was beneficial for the students because they saw that abuse and violence does not just have to be at home or between a boy and girl; the risk is for anyone at any age. After the skits, the students were split into small discussion groups, each led by a peer counselor with the support of an adult observer, including DAS volunteers, teachers, Catholic Family Services, Ravensong Community Health and a parent. In these groups, the students could ask questions and reflect on what they had learned.

Then the grade 10 students were shown a video called "A Love That Kills". This video told the story of

a woman who found herself in a violent relationship that ultimately led to her murder. The video helped reinforce what the students had learned about how traumatic abusive relationships can be.

Afterwards, Constable Wes Fung of the Vancouver Police came to speak to the students and shared his knowledge and advice. The students asked him many questions.

The workshop was a great success. The students learned a lot about patterns of abuse and violence in relationships and it had a tremendous impact on them.

Marie Haughian, Gr. 12 student Peer Counselor



"Understanding the cycle of abuse will help me apply prudential judgment and proper counseling"

Volunteer Training

The expression 'necessity is the mother of invention' became a reality for DAS this year when a team of six took over as the Volunteer Training Team. The daunting task of continuing and restructuring this essential training program for new DAS volunteers was energetically undertaken by Education Chair, Helen Low, who rallied the troops to form a Planning Committee which included Evelyn Vollet, Mavis Toovey, Suzanne Latta, Sharon Irvine, and Ferelyn Brown .

Over a series of meetings, telephone calls and emails, they reviewed the existing program, determined lesson plans,

content, presenters, and created Power Point presentations. The pilot project ran for four consecutive Saturday mornings in March at All Saints Parish. Seventeen participants paid a \$20 registration fee, and all finished the program. They each received a certificate and membership card into the family of OLGC—DAS where they will volunteer in direct and/or indirect services. The team of presenters did an awesome job. The next training session will be an 8 week course planned for the fall. We will update you on the future location.

Suzanne Latta



Carolling for Eva

Last Christmas, Diane and I, with a couple of our friends, decided to go carolling to give cheer to the sick, elderly and disabled. We are not a choir but are people who regularly meet to praise and worship in a private home and love singing Christmas carols. Getting together for practices was not an easy thing to do, but we managed to do so despite our hectic schedules. Practice sessions were a hoot, with much tomfoolery and laughter. That we managed to learn the musical arrangement of the various songs amid the eating and joking around is a marvel to me. Add to that the fact that for some, English is not their first language so they had problems pronouncing certain words properly, some had a short attention span, short term memory and timing problems... well, you can just imagine what a challenge it was. But we had a lot of fun laughing at our own imperfections. Finally, we felt we were ready, so off we went to the nursing homes and community centres to give cheer. The feedback we received was very positive and glowing. Buoyed by these, we thought maybe we could raise money from our carolling for Eva's House. So we called our friends and asked them if we could go to their homes to sing carols for a good cause. No donation would be too small. Appointments were made, and logistics and scheduling were finalized. But as sometimes happens to the best laid plans, nature does not cooperate. The days we were to

go carolling, Greater Vancouver experienced one of its worst winters. We had heavy snowfall even in early December. Concerned of our safety, we talked about cancelling and rebooking our appointments. But many of us had scheduled time off from work on those days to be able to do this and it would not be easy for us to rebook the appointments, as some families were going away for the holidays. So we decided to brave the weather and road conditions. We prayed first to God though, to protect us and keep us safe from harm.

Richmond had become a winter wonderland. The streets were almost deserted except for a few stranded or parked cars. Everything was covered in fresh snow and looked so clean and serene. Slowly we made our way to our appointments. People were amazed to see us at their doorsteps. Either they thought we were dedicated to our cause (which is true), we were desperate for anyone to hear us sing, or we were plain cuckoo. Perhaps it was our determination that impressed them or our singing truly entertained them, for at the end of the day we had raised \$820 for Eva's House. For many of us, it is an experience we will always cherish, for in giving of ourselves, we received far more in return.

Emmy Lee

Yes, I believe in Domestic Abuse Services—OLGCS and would like to give the following gift of support for their good works

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

I have enclosed a cheque payable to Domestic Abuse Services—OLGCS

I would like to be a volunteer

Tax receipts will be issued for donations

Mail to: DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES - Our Lady of Good Counsel Society 2881 Main St., Vancouver, BC, V5T 3G1