



## Message from the Director

2013-14 Annual General Meeting  
25 June 2014



Welcome Everyone!

On behalf of everyone at Chrysalis Society, it's my pleasure to report on another amazing year! We continue to have the privilege of witnessing women beating incredible odds as they overcome addiction, violence, poverty and homelessness! As women-specific resources continue to become scarcer and scarcer, the demand for our services remains incredibly high. This year:

- \* 118 women accessed long-term residential and mental health care through our three recovery homes
- \* 59% of women at New Dawn successfully completed the program
- \* 31% of those women transitioned to New Day or New Way
- \* 64% completed the program at New Day; 46% completed at New Way

As we see time and time again, with effective supports and timely opportunities, women overcome *incredible* adversity and make long-standing, healthy changes in their lives!

For the marginalized women accessing Chrysalis Society, however, these opportunities continue to face ongoing systemic erosion. Women face more barriers as service mandates are compartmentalized (ie: addiction *or* violence *or* mental health services) despite increasing evidence that service segregation of this kind actually increases women's risk and vulnerability (ie: 95% of the women who accessed New Dawn this year reported violence; however, most would be ineligible to access "battered women's shelters" because of their mental health and/or addiction). There seems to be no end in sight for ongoing funding cuts to non-privatized health and social services in BC overall, and while funding for women's services in particular continue to be reduced or eliminated outright, the need for bridging, and, maintaining them remains extremely high.

With ongoing budget cuts to health, social services and education throughout the province, we are all experiencing the impacts of centralization. Within addictions services, Vancouver Coastal Health took over all intake processes for all its contracted residential addiction service providers, including New Dawn. This meant Chrysalis Society no longer had involvement with New Dawn's waitlist and the comprehensive intake processes for women accessing the program. Women in particular experienced increased barriers, and in many cases were unable to access the waitlist because of the comprehensive administrative process, which include a 19 page comprehensive medical/mental health assessment with limited advocacy. The degree to which this process hindered New Dawn's clients was such that VCH agreed to return the waitlist and a majority of the pre-admission and intake process (primarily the advocacy) back to Chrysalis, and did so at year-end (March 2013). Chrysalis is grateful for this and continues to work closely with VCH and the Central Addictions Intake Team to reduce as many barriers as possible for the women we serve despite the systemic changes at hand.

Of the 69 women who accessed New Dawn this year:

- \* 57% (40 women) were homeless
- \* 95% (66 women) reported past or current experiences of violence
- \* 89% (62 women) reported concurrent mental health needs
- \* On average\*, 15 women waitlist for New Dawn per month – that's an average of 180 women per year. On average, only 70 women a year (38%) are able to access one of the 10 beds at New Dawn.

\* This average is based on yearly counts from 2011 – 2013

Our core Team of dedicated staff has been phenomenal as they've transitioned through the impacts of the layoff of our House Manager in April 2013. The House Manager role was an integral full-time role in New Dawn's program, and the cuts required the job be dissolved and absorbed into the ED's role, and, the team. As always, our Team remains strong, and we share cohesion & camaraderie within the crazy ebbs and flows that go with our demanding and rewarding work! The dedication of the team is demonstrated through the exceptional care and service provided to women daily! On behalf of Chrysalis Society I would like to extend a HUGE thank you to our incredible Staff ! Life wouldn't be the same without you all! Trust me !

As well, the evolution of Chrysalis Society's Alumnae Committee has been simply remarkable over the past year, with six women committing to ensuring that a supportive peer community is created and maintained for the women who have accessed our programs. The Committee meets regularly to coordinate fundraising events throughout the year, the proceeds of which support events and gatherings for all of Chrysalis' Alumnae. Thank you to *everyone* on the Alumnae Committee for your dedication, service and generosity! You are each living proof that women do recover, and remain an inspiration to us all!

Chrysalis would not be able to operate without the foundation and backbone of the Board, a Board which continues to strengthen and grow! This year, Rebeca Avendano was able to return to the Board after a year of maternity leave with her new, first-born son; and the Board was joined by Jordon Friesen, who continues to lend his accounting skills and talents to the Treasurer role. All of our Volunteer Directors provide ongoing support that is absolutely invaluable and critical to the core operation and structure of our Society, and I'd like to give an enormous thank you to every Director for the ongoing dedication, time, contributions and hard work you provide to Chrysalis!

As relatively new home-owners, we were able to focus on upgrade initiatives this year, and we can now access capital funding that was previously unavailable. Several projects are underway, with funding being sought for interior/exterior painting, cabinetry re-facing and a main floor bathroom renovation at New Dawn; as well as flooring upgrades and exterior washing/painting at New Day. We are also seeking the assistance of a Professional Organizer to assist us with redesigning and organizing the garages at both New Dawn and New Day.

After a year of discussion and coordination with us, The Vancouver Dispensary Society (VDS) donated landscaping services, and four small vegetable/flower garden plots for New Dawn's back yard. The donation includes ongoing maintenance of the yard and gardens, and is Phase 1 of a 2-phase project. Phase 2 will be implemented in the spring of 2015, with a goal of installing a water feature. The environment at New Dawn is profoundly changed by the addition of these gardens (not to mention the meals, which now include fresh lettuce and vegetables daily) – the women absolutely *love* them! We remain extremely grateful for the ongoing support from everyone at The Dispensary!

This has been a year of profound changes for Chrysalis, and once again we have weathered the storm/s! Clearly our successes have always been underpinned by the dedication & generosity of people – we continue, now more than ever, to depend on the grassroots support of our volunteers and stakeholders. We feel inexpressible gratitude for the invaluable contributions of everyone connected to Chrysalis – we could not continue to do what we do without all of you!

Our goal is to continue increasing the number of monthly donors to a minimum of 50 individuals or groups committed to a monthly donation of \$25 - \$100. We intend to continue increasing the number of people we're connected with, through our Board of Directors, Volunteers, Social Media and Community events! So please get involved!! Connect with us online, join our Board, Volunteer, get together with friends and coworkers to make a group monthly contribution... we're all community, and we *all* benefit when women recover from addiction and violence!

Thank You ALL for working with us to make recovery possible for women!

*Shannon Skilton*