

Centre's training program is back on track, thanks to you ...



Participants and teaching assistants from the 2011-12 Volunteer Counsellor Training Program at the fall retreat

After a one-year hiatus, the Centre's volunteer counsellor training program is off to a great start.

An energetic new trainer, three able teaching assistants and seventeen eager participants have come together to build the capacity that enables the Centre to serve the community.

Having to cancel the training program last year due to funding cutbacks meant a reduction in the number of clients the Centre could serve. Thanks to the community's support, the Centre was able to reinstate this critical program in September.

Participants meet once a week for an always over-full evening of learning and attend two intensive weekend retreats during the training. Once they complete the challenging 10-month long training program, volunteer counsellors each "pay back" their agreed upon commitment by providing 250 hours of service to the Centre.

The training provides a balance between personal growth and

skill development, according to trainer Cheryl MacKinnon. "Of course you need skill development but personal learning is equally important in our view", says Cheryl. "If you don't know where you are coming from, you are not going to be able to help anyone else figure that out for themselves."

"the Centre not only promotes mental health but contributes to building individual and community capacity"

The Centre's training program is well known in the community and many more people than can be accommodated apply to be accepted into the program. Over the years, a number of of the Centre's former clients have returned to the agency and been trained as volunteers, who then go on to provide counselling for others. In this way the Centre not only promotes mental health but contributes to building individual and community capacity.

In addition to donations from individuals, the REALTORS® of Greater Victoria provided \$5,000 towards the training program. Michael Sampson, Manager, Communications & Professional Standards, Victoria Real Estate Board, stated, "The Board is pleased to support the GVCCC's volunteer training program and recognizes the valuable contribution that the program and the volunteers make to our community's well-being. Through the Board, REALTORS® offer financial and other support to a wide range of worthwhile community groups based on the Board's adoption of a set of Quality of Life principles."

The total annual cost to cover the training and supervision of 17 participants is \$36,000. The Centre still needs to raise funds towards this program. To learn how to double your donation to this valuable program, read about the "Face-to Face Fund" on page 3.



**Citizens
COUNSELLING
CENTRE**



Assisting adult community members in attaining socially and psychologically satisfying lives by providing quality, accessible, volunteer counselling services.

Friends use imaginative ways to support the Centre

From a dinner party called 'A day to make a difference,' to a course on investing in the stock market, people are finding new ways to spread the word and encourage donations.

Margaret Bachmann, a (brand-new) friend of the Centre, hosts an annual event at her home to celebrate people who have made a difference in the lives of others. She chooses a different theme and charity each year. This past summer, she chose Citizens' Counselling Centre. In her thoughtful, hand-written invitations, she asked participants to bring a cheque (minimum donation of \$25) for the Centre, with this apt description: "Sometimes you just need to tell your story to someone to bring new insights, healing or transformation."

"The more people that hear about you and your work, the better"

Marg's group donated \$330, and equally as important, learned about the Centre and the work it does. In Marg's words, "The more people that hear about you and your work, the better."

Joel Goldsmith, a longtime volunteer counsellor at the Centre, offers investment courses in the other part of his life. For the past year he has been telling course participants about the Centre and donating a portion of the fees to the Centre.



Another volunteer counsellor at Citizens' came up with this idea to make sure we reach our \$5,000-a-quarter donation target to take advantage of the new Face-to-Face matching fund: "I usually give away clothes I no longer wear. This time I consigned them and will donate the proceeds to the Centre. If I make \$100 from doing this and give it to the Centre, I get a tax receipt and the Centre gets \$100 and then another \$100 through the Face-to-Face campaign. This is the kind of win-win I love."

A butcher, a baker, a candle-stick maker...

Not quite, but this year's participants in the Centre's volunteer counsellor training program come from a wide range of vocations:

- art teacher
- business woman
- research assistant
- homemaker
- childcare leader
- early child care education assistant
- computer consultant
- elder care worker
- addiction worker
- massage therapist
- mental health worker
- teacher
- civil servant
- doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine
- IT manager
- community health care worker.



Why do we do what we do?

We believe that every person has the right to access quality counselling services regardless of ability to pay.

We believe that people are resourceful and capable of making choices and decisions for themselves.

How effective are our services?

Clients complete a survey after their final session. The results (fiscal year 2010-11) show that for the vast majority of clients, the counselling they receive at Citizens' makes a moderate to significant change in their lives:

Significant Change:	42%
Moderate Change:	40%
Small Change:	14.5%

Centre Welcomes a new Chair and Board Members

- Chair: John Gawthrop
- Past Chair: Sharon Hume
- Vice-Chair: Chris Hoyer
- Treasurer: Lisa Underdown
- Secretary: Gill Roach
- Cathy Brown
- Derek Collins
- Sara Comish (new)
- Jane Johnston
- Jocelyne Mui (new)
- John Phillips
- Bev Regan
- Linda Saunders (new)
- Arta Sinclair
- Andy Wachtel

Counsellor Reps

- Sarah Flynn
- Michelle Gay
- Meg Kapil (new)

ICAF | FACE

New fund will match your donation, dollar-for-dollar

A local yoga group has come forward to pledge \$20,000 in matching funds for the Centre over the next year. This new initiative is called the "Face-to-Face Fund," with proceeds going to the volunteer counsellor training program. As of October 1st, this group will match your donations to the Centre, committing up to \$5,000 per quarter.

\$20,000 is the largest donation in the Centre's history

A spokesperson for the yoga group said, "Each year, we research a gap in local services and create opportunities for giving. We make the giving really count by doubling or tripling the funds. We believe in creating a culture of giving in organizations."

Last year, this group matched funds for the Homeless Prevention Fund and the year before established a Single Parent Bursary Fund at Camosun College.

In addition to providing funds, this group is donating expertise and resources to the Centre.

One member of the group, Alisa Kerr, is a highly regarded videographer. Through her company HIDEF Productions, she created a memorable video to post on our website.

Linda Saunders, Citizens' Board Member and Fundraising Committee Chair, said, "The Centre is very fortunate to have a new group of ambassadors promoting accessible, affordable



Look for the video on our website

counselling services. By targeting the counsellor training program, the donation will have a huge ripple effect. We are confident that both new and previous donors will come forward to take advantage of this generous matching opportunity."

Watch a video about the counsellor training program on our website.

www.citizenscounselling.com

Do your donor dollars deliver?

The *Globe and Mail* recently ran an in-depth series on charitable giving in Canada. In an article entitled "Make the most of your donation dollars," (Oct. 31, 2011, p. L6) writer Tralee Pearce advises donors that in addition to choosing charities that reflect your values, you should examine your charities' finances and effectiveness. The article poses three questions in this regard:

How efficiently does it use its money?



The Centre has an efficient business model that enables it to keep its overhead low, while ensuring the quality of its counselling services. All counselling is provided by volunteers. The Centre's annual budget is about \$245,000, most of which covers administrative, supervisory, and training costs. The value of the counselling services provided by volunteers is about \$1 million.

How accountable and transparent is the charity?

Citizens' Counselling's most recent annual report and financial statements are available on its website, previous years are available on request. The Executive Director provides the Board of Directors with monthly financial reports at each board meeting. In addition to financial information, the Centre compiles quarterly, and semi-annual, and annual statistics on its clients, including age, source of income, area of residence, source of referral, fees paid, and presenting issues. For funding agencies such as the United Way, the Centre must report on a wide range of issues and outcomes.

Does it fulfill its goals?

Citizens' primary goal is to provide accessible, affordable counselling to adults that will enable them to live more satisfying lives. Evaluations completed by both clients and counsellors indicate that the vast majority of clients make positive changes in their lives as a result of the counselling.

The Centre's secondary goal is to enrich the community through the training of volunteer counsellors. In its 42 year history, the Centre has trained over 700 counsellors, many of whom have gone on to become professional counsellors, while others have applied their skills and knowledge in their homes, workplaces and community.



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And caring community members, like you

Friends of the Centre is published twice per year

Local doctor places a high value on Centre's services

I have practiced family medicine in Victoria for 14 years, and especially enjoy helping patients find better health through mind-body practices.

I refer people to Citizens' Counselling for many common problems like depression, anxiety and stress.

Many folks have also found help to deal with relationship troubles, substance dependence and work issues.



Over the years I have had numerous patients express deep gratitude for the counselling they received at Citizens'. For many people, this is the only counselling they could ever afford, and it can be a life-saver. Mental Health services in Victoria are some of the best, but access is limited, and

our situation would be desperate were it not for groups like Citizens' Counselling. *Dr. Caspar Friesen*

Top five issues

Brenda Wilson, Executive Director, has been at the helm of Citizens' Counselling for 32 years. Over the years, she has come to expect certain patterns in the issues that clients come to seek help with. Last year was no exception with **stress/anxiety, depression, relationships/communication, self-esteem, addiction and abuse** once again the issues that most often bring clients to the Centre.

"Over the last decade we have seen a huge increase in the amount of stress, anxiety and panic attacks cited by our clients. Depression was always at the top of the list and now stress and anxiety is right there beside it. I'm sure everyone can relate – life does seem more and more stressful."

"But now it seems that in addition to the 35 year old stressed about juggling children, work and an increasingly frayed relationship, and the 55 year old who is caring for grandchildren, aging parents and facing increased worries about ever being able to retire, we now have the 22 year olds who are having a really hard time finding their way as adults, binge drinking, losing hope that they will ever be able to find and keep satisfying work that will enable them to stay living in high priced Victoria."

"Overall the issues don't really change all that much," she continues, "but the complexity has increased a lot. Very few clients come with one issue to work on. They have a lot going on in their lives and of course, given that many of them live at or below the poverty line, they are also stressed about money".

The power of group counselling



Three times each year the Centre offers a variety of psycho-educational groups for those wishing to explore their issues in a safe and confidential group setting. Five groups were offered this fall. Groups run for eight weeks, and participants pay on a sliding scale, with an average fee of \$7 per session.

The groups are:

- Moving Beyond Stress, Anxiety and Depression
- Exploring Anger
- Self-esteem for Women who Struggle in Intimate Relationships
- Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Anxiety & Depression
- Effective Communication for Individuals and Couples

According to Meg Kapil, a volunteer counsellor at the Centre, "Facilitating groups is always a rich and varied experience not just because the focus

is different between groups but also because the participants are unique as individuals and as a collective."

Meg recalls a recent group she co-facilitated. The participants spanned about 40 years in age difference, came from a variety of backgrounds, and initially appeared very different. As the group progressed, these participants not only were open to learning new material and integrating the new information in their lives, they supported each other through the many hurdles and successes involved in the change process.

She observed; "As facilitators, we were left with a strong sense of respect for these brave individuals and touched by their resilience, caring, and optimism. In essence, they showed us the power of possibility that emerges from sharing personal experiences in the unique context of a group."

The Gift of Peace – for any occasion

Citizens' has available a lovely way to recognize someone that you love or appreciate with a gift that provides peace of mind to other members of our community – the Citizens' Donation Certificate. Each certificate purchased helps to make counselling sessions

affordable for one of the Centre's clients. A \$25 gift buys 4 counselling sessions, \$50 buys 8 and \$100 buys 16. We are happy to snail or e-mail them to your recipient, or to you directly. Please call or email us today.

