

Dear Friend of the North Shore Women's Centre,

Over **4,000** women accessed the North Shore Women's Centre in 2014 through programs and services such as:

- Drop-in Resource Centre and Peer Counselling
- Emergency Food and Toiletries
- Family Law Clinic
- Computer Training
- Health and Wellness Practitioners and Classes
- Lending Library
- Single Mother's Support Group
- Educational Workshops

The North Shore Women's Centre also offered support for teen girls through an annual summer Girls Empowerment Camp. The girls learned skills to help them help themselves, as they navigate through difficult teen years, and then through the rest of their lives.

All this was provided with **no cost** to participants, and with a staff of only 3 part-time employees. With the support of the North Shore Women's Centre, many women and girls across the community have found their way to flourish.

But the North Shore Women's Centre now needs your help. It cannot continue to provide these essential services without additional staff and resources. The North Shore Women's Centre is relying on donors, like you. For example a gift of:

- **\$100** provides 3 hours of one-on-one peer counseling, information and emotional support that helped her gain the confidence she needed to change her life.
- **\$250** can put a girl through our summer camp for one week, where she is encouraged to be confident, to love her body, and to learn practical skills to build healthy friendships and relationships.
- **\$900** will make it possible for a single mother and her children to have a safe place to connect each week for an entire year through our facilitated support group.

Today we are asking if you can help the North Shore Women's Centre, and help more women to flourish.

Please read on for the stories of Melissa, Carolyn and Annabel – just three of the many women the Centre has helped this year.

"My name is Melissa*. I can tell you now that I was in a violent relationship for many years. I was often so scared for myself and my children, but the thought of leaving or reporting what was going on was almost more frightening. He was a professional and such a charmer. Who would believe me? What could I do? Could I ever leave? If I did leave, would it get even worse? Could I make the all the changes that needed to happen for me and my kids? How would I support us? These were the questions I asked myself over and over again, especially after one of his explosions. It felt so overwhelming, and I felt very alone. I was just going through the motions of life, often sick and depressed, and trying to be there for my kids as much as I could. I saw a brochure for the North Shore Women's Centre – a place for women offering peer counselling and confidential referrals. The hardest step was walking through the door that first time and finally telling someone everything that was happening. But somehow I did it. Finding help from the Centre, I eventually became confident enough, and had the right supports in place to get out. Over the next several years of getting assistance at the Centre, following up on referrals for other community supports, and accessing Centre programs like the legal clinic and single mom's group, I tackled the next steps, and no longer felt alone."

"I am Carolyn*. I am a senior, widowed a number of years ago, with no family close by. I don't quite know how it happened, but I kept finding myself living in a series of substandard accommodations, with landlords often taking financial advantage of me, and verbally abusing me. I often feared for my safety from the landlords and other tenants. I was lonely and depressed. Things changed though when I happened to walk by the North Shore Women's Centre, and went in. I told my story to Centre staff members and volunteers. They listened, and they cared! Going to the drop in centre has become a regular part of my life. I found support and friendship, and even a new landlord."

"My name is Annabel*, and I am a single mother of two. I was really struggling both financially and emotionally to raise my kids. In an affluent community like North Vancouver, I felt like I was the only one in this mess. One day, I saw a sign for the Single Mom's Support Group at the North Shore Women's Centre. I signed up, and truly, it changed my life. For that whole next year, I got information, skills training and, best of all, the chance to meet and share with other women in my situation (and it even came with free child care). By the end of the year, I actually had a close network of friends and new skills, both as a parent and professionally. Through the group, I discovered my strengths, and had the confidence to pursue them. Actually, I even started my own business. While it is still difficult, I really am thriving now, and so are my kids."

"If women are healthy and educated, their families will flourish. If women are free from violence, their families will flourish. If women have a chance to work and earn as full and equal partners in society, their families will flourish. And when families flourish, communities and nations will flourish."

– Hillary Clinton, Speech, United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, September 5, 1995

Please help more women and girls in our community to flourish by donating now, or by becoming a sustaining donor. Online donations can be made at www.northshorewomen.ca or you can call the Centre directly at 604-984-6009.

As women flourish, so will their children, so will their families, and so will our community. You can make it happen!

Thank you for your generous support.

North Shore Women's Centre Board and Staff