

Outline Proposal

To: Jane Macdonald, Program Director,
Vancouver Foundation

From: Suzanne Mackenzie and Maggie Shirley
West Kootenay Women's Association

Re: Nelson and District Women's Centre - Furnishing Request

Date: December 9, 1994

West Kootenay Women's Association Registered Charitable Number
0463638 - 09

We are requesting \$5,550.00 to help furnish our newly purchased Women's Centre. We wish to buy furniture for our drop-in area, library/resource file area and meeting rooms.

The Nelson and District Women's Centre, established in 1972, is the main project of the West Kootenay Women's Association (WKWA), an umbrella group with 180 members which sponsors welfare and educational programs for women. The Women's Centre provides a place where women throughout the greater Nelson area can obtain information, referrals and support, use the library and resource files or participate in a variety of support and action groups. Current support groups include those for victims of violence, childhood sexual assault survivors and smokers. We also coordinate an advocacy group on training and skill development for local women, a regional women's health group and a career role-modelling project for young women. The Centre is also an active advocate and lobbyist on issues concerning women's rights in our community. (Please see appended pamphlets on the West Kootenay Women's Association and the Nelson and District Women's Centre.)

For more than twenty years, therefore, the Centre has provided a safe, friendly, comfortable space for women to meet, work, share skills and knowledge, and launch projects. Until 1994, we have done this in cramped, rented quarters. Our accommodations have never been accessible to physically challenged people, never provided safe children's space and always required that we edit our newsletter, answer our phones, counsel visitors, ^{WVA support groups} make tea and repair broken toys in the same place. We managed, as women usually do, to remain generally cheerful under these less than optimum conditions.

In February of 1994, we realized a two-decade-old dream when we bought a structurally sound but thoroughly run-down house near downtown Nelson. We used the fruits of over ten years local fundraising, largely but certainly not entirely among our members, for our down payment. The house required extensive renovations and to assist with this we obtained a Human Resources Development Job Development Project with a budget of \$61,160. This provided wages and some materials for a journeywoman trainer and three trainees to do basic renovations. We also received funding from BC 21 under their Community Projects program. Upon verification of our having already spent the money, this \$21,673.00 allocation will go for materials and labour necessary to carry out basic electrical and plumbing work, and to purchase a new furnace and floor coverings. We have also carried out and continue to carry out local fundraising efforts, both within our membership and throughout the greater Nelson area and beyond. As well, the project has benefitted from hundreds of hours of volunteer labour and much donated material. To date, we have expended or committed \$182,908 on the new Centre project. (See Budget A. We can provide details of these budgets on request.)

The basic renovation project is nearing completion. We expect to be doing fine-finishing work by early February. We moved from our rented premises to the new house November 26 and are currently unpacking and working amidst the table saws and paint cans.

Already our ongoing support groups and some new groups — including a tradeswomen's group — are using the new facilities. We will be able to expand our drop-in functions, our resource files and library, and to increase the number of support groups and action/advocacy groups. We plan to respond positively to as many creative ideas for use of the space as we can possibly accommodate. For the first time we will be accessible to women of all abilities (which, of course, requires keeping up with shovelling the heavy snowfalls off our new sidewalks!) and we will be able to provide childcare in childsafe space for women using the Centre. Our January calendar is already bursting.

In short, we have a beautiful, newly plumbed, safely wired, freshly painted, fully roofed house with a new furnace and wheelchair-accessible entrance and washroom. More than a hundred women and dozens of men can point to some feature and say, "I did that!" or "I donated that!" or "I raised money for that!" Every day we use our new Centre is a celebration.

However — we are doing most of this while squatting on the floor or leaning on the walls, writing on our knees. While our coordinators' offices are fairly well equipped with furniture from our old Centre and some donations, the rest of the house is nearly bare (excepting the soon-to-be-removed table saws and piles of cabinet-finishing material). We very much need sturdy, good-quality furnishings for our public-use rooms, as well as materials for some outdoor work.

We are talking to local merchants, we are phone-canvassing our members and supporters, we are holding raffles and dinners and other creative fundraising events, and we are writing letters and newspaper stories. Despite our best efforts, however, we live in a community whose finances are limited, and so we are writing to you to request assistance.

Specifically, we are requesting from the Vancouver Foundation \$5,550.00 to purchase furnishings for our drop-in and library/resource file areas, children's area and our meeting rooms. (These four rooms total 55 square metres. We can provide photocopies of blueprints if you wish.) We have appended a list of the furnishings members agree are most essential. Prices are those supplied by local merchants, as it is our policy, if possible, to patronize local businesses. (See appended Budget B.)

In addition, we expect our local fundraising efforts will result in about \$5,000.00, including goods and services. This will supply us with some additional office equipment and pay for fencing our back yard, paving our parking area to improve its accessibility for physically challenged people, and doing some landscaping (see appended Budget C).

For more than twenty years the Nelson and District Women's Centre has provided unique and valued services to our community (we can provide letters of support if you wish). As the greater Nelson area experiences a boom in population and a radical restructuring of its economy, our client population is both increasing and altering. We are having to adapt quickly and act creatively to meet growing and changing needs. While our activities are of course the Centre's *raison d'être*, these are possible only if our space too can grow and adapt. We have worked hard to make this possible, drawing upon every aspect of community resources. We shall continue to do so. Your assistance at this time would be valuable, much appreciated and heartening. It would make a real and lasting contribution to our ongoing work.

Respectfully submitted.

Budgets

for the

new

**Nelson & District
Women's Centre House**

1994-1995

Budget A

Overall Project Budget

Purchase of property and house funded by mortgage and WKWA funds	90,548.73
Re-zoning fees and house overhead for period of renovation WKWA funds	6,896.47
Construction work renovation Human Resources Job Development Project	61,160.26
Volunteer labour	2,630.00
Basic renovation and materials (re-wiring, plumbing, furnace, floor coverings: labour and supplies) BC 21 Community Projects Grant Program	21,673.04
Total Project Budget to date	182,908.50

Budget B
Furnishing and Finishing
Request to
Vancouver Foundation

Drop-in area furnishings Couch, armchairs, end tables	1,700.00
12 stacking chairs for meeting rooms and library/resource areas @ \$50.00 ea.	600.00
Fixed-leg table and six wooden chairs for meeting/resource area	900.00
Two folding-leg tables for project/meeting areas @ \$100.00 ea.	200.00
Lamps for drop-in/library areas	100.00
Television. 27" for resource area/support group use	900.00
VCR – for resource area/support group use	350.00
Two TV/VCR stands with rollers (one each for use in upstairs and downstairs meeting rooms) @ \$150.00 each	300.00
Furniture and toys for children's area and climbing toy for yard	400.00
Kitchen trolley – to assist in making kitchen facilities and refreshments available to women of all physical abilities	100.00
Total requested from Vancouver Foundation	5,550.00

(The above figures are rounded out. Precise figures from estimates available on request.)

Budget C

Furnishing and Finishing

Locally raised money, goods and services

Pedestal desk	500.00
Desk chair	300.00
Four-drawer filing cabinet	300.00
Two chair mats @ \$75.00 ea.	150.00

All above for community project area

Kitchen supplies (dishes, linens)	200.00
Fencing	
130 linear feet of vinyl-covered chain-link fence	1500.00
44 linear feet of cedar board fence	350.00
Paving parking area	
775 square feet @ \$2.00 per square foot	1550.00
Landscaping	
Lawn seed, plants, equipment use	300.00
Total to be locally raised for furnishing and finishing	5,150.00

(The above figures are rounded out. Precise figures from estimates available on request.)

**Final Report
Vancouver Foundation Grant
to the West Kootenay Women's Association
for Finishing and Furnishing the new Women's Centre**

The West Kootenay Women's Association is pleased to report on the successful completion of our grant generously supplied by the Vancouver Foundation. The WKWA received a grant of \$5,500 to assist with finishing and furnishing our beautiful new centre.

The grant was requested to purchase furnishings for our drop-in and library/resource file areas, children's area and our meeting rooms. In our application, we had requested amounts for purchasing specific items. We did indeed purchase several of the items that we indicated in our application. For example, we purchased five coffee/end tables for three separate areas, a lamp, a 27" TV and VCR. We changed some of our purchases – we bought seventeen stacking chairs and, because of the size of the TV, we are having a full length TV/VCR stand and storage unit custom made. There were several items that we had put in our application that were either donated, purchased previously or determined to be less of a priority than other items. We had a couch and four armchairs donated to us by members, a local merchant donated several toys and games and we purchased a kitchen trolley previous to receiving the grant. We determined that creating a retaining wall and parking area in the back yard were priorities to complete before the fall. We needed curtains as soon as possible to provide a safe environment for women attending support groups.

We made our purchases with great care. Whenever possible, we bought our goods locally, with the exception of the IKEA furniture (which was considerably below the price of local furniture) and the Bridgehead sofa cover (we like to support fair trade organizations). Our policy to buy locally was wise, as we received excellent deals on our TV/VCR (\$855) and our portable stereo/CD player (\$330) from supportive business owners. Of course, we hired local women to construct items whenever it was financially feasible and possible. We hired five different women to build a retaining wall, create the parking area, make our storage/shelving units, finish furniture and sew curtains.

The result of our purchases with this grant is a beautiful Women's Centre that feels like home. This is important for the women of our community, especially those in crisis. Because of the Vancouver Foundation grant, the women in our support groups have chairs to sit on instead of cushions. We have initiated a new weekly event called "Wonderful Wednesdays" where an average of twenty women come to watch videos or listen to guest speakers, now that we have chairs to sit them on and a TV/VCR. This event has been particularly successful in drawing older women to our Centre. We now offer a monthly drop-in evening for lesbian/bisexual women (average attendance of twelve) who come to play games, discuss issues and watch videos. The women have expressed that a big part of this events success is due to the "homey" atmosphere.

This grant has played an important role in our overall fundraising effort to finish and maintain Jean Mackenzie House, providing the finishing touches to our Centre. We are continuing to raise funds through member donations and fundraising activities. We have received an anonymous donation of \$9,100 that we will use to initiate a project to raise money to pay for the mortgage and ongoing costs of the house.

We will be publically acknowledging the Foundation's role in funding the furnishings in our house by fixing a sign to the side of the new shelving unit, housing the TV/VCR.
