

Power of Women's "In Our Own Voices"

DTES women write their own experiences over four weeks. Week one will featured the journeys that have brought women to the Downtown Eastside, week two drew attention to child apprehension and violence against women, week three explored daily life – from working the street to police brutality - on skid row, and week four highlighted ongoing issues of homelessness and poverty in our neighbourhood.



Mental Health and Police Violence

by Shurli Chan

The heart of the Downtown Eastside (DTES) is home to survivors of the war on terror: the terror of poverty, physical and spiritual abuse, child apprehension, addictions, and residential schools - all of which quietly destroy the human spirit. Yet in spite of its image as the poorest urban postal code in the country, the DTES has the highest number of art galleries per capita in the country. This seeming contradiction becomes more understandable when one looks more deeply into the neighbourhood. The DTES is

in my family and I had battled it in the form of depression for much of my adolescent and adult life. A bout of hypomania took me from working at a university and living a comfortable middle-class existence in one of Vancouver's priciest neighbourhoods to becoming homeless.

In this province, there are 15,500 adults with severe addictions or mental illness who are homeless. When one is mentally unstable and

doesn't have stable housing, keeping track of health appointments takes a backseat to overt survival. People are too busy foraging for food, waiting in line for a shelter bed, pandhandling for a few dollars, or searching for clothes or cardboard to protect against the rain and snow. Under such stressful situations, even the most mentally stable and capable will become unstable!

made up of the most extremes in our society —brutality and indifference on the one hand, and selfless generosity and compassion on the other hand.

My entry into the world of the DTES started four years ago when I spiraled into homelessness due to a mental illness that was later diagnosed as bipolar, anxiety, and ADHD. It seems that it runs

The Intergenerational Impact of Child Apprehension

by Courtney

At the age of 12 years old is when the abuse in my parents' home started. My siblings and I were subjected to physical and emotional abuse and violence by my parents. We had many visits from the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) but my siblings and I were forced to lie about the abuse because we were afraid that telling the truth would result in even more abuse.

In 1994, at the age of 15, I was pregnant and gave birth to my first child. The abuse from my parents continued, until I could not take it anymore and I ran away from home. The following day I was taken into

MCFD's foster care and from then onwards, I was moved from home to home. I lost custody of my son, who was also placed into the foster system, thus perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of child apprehension and misery in the foster system.



I have read a report that in B.C., young women who have been permanently apprehended by MCFD are four times more likely to become pregnant than young women who have never been in the foster care system. I, too, became pregnant with my second child while in foster care. During my pregnancy, the foster mother slept all day, and I was responsible for our meals and all the cleaning. I

was constantly kicked, my hair was pulled, and I was kicked in my stomach. I made phone calls to MCFD, the police, and youth advocates for more support for my unborn baby and I, but to no avail. Instead, when I gave birth, MCFD apprehended my second child as well. Since they were both apprehended, I have not seen my two sons, nor do I know anything about their well-being.

Read the full series at vancouver.mediacoop.ca

Housing and Homelessness in the Downtown Eastside

Patricia D. Haram

In 2006, I found myself going around in circles for six months trying to find work. Shortly thereafter I became homeless and my health issues deteriorated and I had chronic pain. I had spent three months couch-surfing on my brother's couch and all my belongings were in storage. I was constantly anxious about how I was going to pay for the next month's rent for storage. I was accessing food banks once a week to keep myself nourished.

In October 2006, I walked through the doors of the Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre (DEWC). By then, I was homeless, in pain, and with no prospects of finding a job. The DEWC became a great asset for me to get support, resources, advocacy, and to acquaint myself with

the area. Soon enough, I was lucky and managed to secure housing in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), where I have resided for the past five years.

Until I moved to the DTES, I was unfamiliar with the crisis of homelessness and poverty. There are approximately 11,000 homeless across BC, with 2500 homeless in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Those who are homeless are disproportionately Native and most are suffering from some kind of physical or mental health issue or disability.

Most people do not realize the impact that being homeless has on people's lives. I was only homeless for three months, while many others are homeless for years, even decades. I cannot even begin to comprehend how people survive through the serious physical and psychological consequences on one's well-being. The impacts of homelessness include feelings of isolation, spread of infectious disease, and health deterioration from exposure to cold and wet weather, and lack of safety and privacy especially for women.



Aftermath of Canucks Riot

by Zig Zag

In their haste to demonize the rioters of June 15, authorities have painted them as “anarchists and criminals,” who weren’t “real” Canucks fans; a small minority who took advantage of the large crowds to carry out a premeditated campaign of vandalism, arson, and looting. Vancouver police chief Jim Chu has vowed to get the anarchists responsible, whom he linked to Black Bloc militants that carried out attacks during the anti-Olympic protest on Feb. 13 (the 2010 Heart Attack).

Meanwhile, in another world entirely, the political ideologues of the left have passed their learned judgment on the riot, dismissing it as being devoid of political content, a product of alcohol, machismo, and corporate culture. Some have criticized reports published on the Vancouver Media Coop, which have linked the riot to rebellions in the Middle East, against the G20, etc., offended that such ‘mindless hooliganism’ is equaled to that of ‘genuine’ political revolt.

Riot Stats

INJURIES: Altogether there were some 150 people injured, most from tear gas, pepper spray, cuts, burns, blunt trauma wounds, and assaults. One man remained in critical condition after falling 40 feet from a viaduct overpass. There were four persons reported stabbed. At least 14 cops were injured, one with a brick to the head requiring stitches and one suffering a concussion.

PERSONNEL: An estimated 100,000 people were in the downtown area at the time the rioting began. Of this, several thousand actively participated and stayed in the downtown core. Police deployed some 500-700 officers, with some 100 members of the RCMP and Abbotsford department.

DAMAGES: There were more than 50 businesses damaged, including broken windows, smashed display cases, with over \$1 million in damages and merchandise stolen from London Drugs alone (according to Wynn Powell, the president and CEO of London Drugs). There were 17 cars destroyed by arson (including two cop cars), according to ICBC. Numerous trash bins were set on fire. Rioting occurred over a ten block radius of the downtown core.

TARGETS: Corporate stores attacked included Future Shop, Sears, Chapters, Bank of Montreal, Hudsons Bay, Bell, 7-11, Blenz, Black and Lee (a tuxedo store), Pacific Car Rentals, and a number of fashion stores including Swimwear Etc., Sterling shoes, Yedina clothing, and Mego.

ARRESTS: During the night of rioting, police arrested some 100 people, and this number is rising over the days as more people are identified from the large amounts of photos and video circulating on the internet and submitted to police. By June 20 117 arrests had been reported in total by Vancouver police (85 for breach of the peace, other charges included assault, break and enter, and public intoxication).

CONTAINMENT: By 9:30PM, bus service into the downtown core was stopped, and Seabus sailings only ran one way (out of the downtown to the North Shore). Skytrain service was reportedly disrupted due to the large crowds boarding it, beginning at 8:30PM, and people were unable to use it to get downtown. Police claim the rioting had ended after three hours (approximately 10:30PM), but incidents continued until much later. Glass repair companies were only advised to enter the area at 1AM, once it was declared secure.

1994: During the 1994 riot, some two hundred people were injured and over \$1 million in damages inflicted, with far less looting than occurred in 2011.

flux photos



What Do You Do With a Scab? PICKET!

VANCOUVER - Locked out Rocky Mountaineer Railtours attendants picketed outside the Rocky Mountaineer station in Vancouver this evening. The members of Local 31 of the Teamsters say more than 70 “replacement workers” have already been brought in to do their jobs. The onboard workers have been without a contract since they joined the Teamsters earlier this year.

Some on the picket line yesterday said they were forced to serve scabs in training on their last rail tour before 72-hour lockout notice was served on the 150 employees Tuesday. Union staff were kicked off the train Wednesday in Kamloops.

The picket line delayed busloads of scabs and managers in cars before letting them through the line amid shouts of “Shame” and “What do you do with a scab? Picket!”



Posties deliver ultimatum

NORTH VANCOUVER - RCMP briefly arrested four CUPW postal workers this evening. The four occupied the downtown community office of Conservative MP Andrew Saxton all day - refusing to leave until the Harper government reverses its decision to invoke back-to-work legislation.

The RCMP said they relayed the group’s

ultimatum to Saxton in Ottawa, but had to make the arrests on a charge of assault by trespass after Saxton office staff complained. One was escorted and three were carried out by RCMP officers, then released outside the office.

About 50 fellow workers and supporters held a noisy information picket and drivers were constantly honking to show their support for the locked out workers.

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PURPLE THISTLE INSTITUTE

Thinking about what to do over the long hot summer? Enrol at the Purple Thistle Institute! The PTI is something like an alternative university, or maybe better: an alternative-to-university. The idea is to bring together a bunch of engaged, interested people to talk about theory, ideas and practise for radical social change. We'll have a great time, meet good people, get our praxis challenged and with luck refine and renew our ideas, politics and energies. Importantly, the conversations will very deliberately cut across radical orientations – anarchists, socialists, lefties, progressives, anti-colonialists, anti-authoritarians, ecologists of all stripes are welcome. The idea is to work, think and talk together – to articulate and comprehend differences sure – but to find common ground, get beyond factionalized pettiness and stimulate radical ecological and egalitarian social change.

And don't forget the Downtown East Side Neighbourhood Council (DNC) Street Market is every Sunday til 5pm at Pigeon Park



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