

YWCA RECEIVES FUNDING TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLAN TO ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE BOW VALLEY

September 29, 2015 - Bow Valley, AB - YWCA Banff has been awarded a \$121,000 Family and Community Safety Grant through the Department of Human Services, to develop a collaborative community response plan to address sexual violence in the Bow Valley.

“A community response plan is a collaborative approach to address sexual violence issues,” says Connie MacDonald, CEO at YWCA Banff. “Our goal is to create a plan that will include a full continuum of services from awareness, prevention and education through counselling and crisis support.”

As part of the application, submitted last November, the YWCA received letters of support from the RCMP, Bow Valley Victim Services, Canmore and Banff FCSS, Mineral Springs Hospital, Primary Care Network, Child and Family Services and Banff Lake Louise Hotel Motel Association.

Initially submitted as a three-year grant, the current funding is for one year only. Once a project timeline is established, the YWCA will work with Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services (AASAS) and stakeholders to establish a working committee, hire a project manager, conduct a community assessment of resources, expertise and partnerships followed up by the development of a strategic framework and plan for a customized service model of delivery in the Bow Valley.

In Alberta, 58% of women report that they have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical assault since the age of 16. However only 6% of women ever report their sexual assault to the police. The other 94% struggle silently to cope with the long-term effects.

“Sexual assault and abuse is a problem in every community,” says MacDonald. “Bow Valley Victim Services report that intimate partner violence and sexualize assault are two of the most frequent occurrences responded to by program volunteers. Our goal is to ensure that we have appropriate services and outreach that will provide the best support for our community.”

The YWCA has also recently launched a needs assessment around shelter and transition housing needs for women experiencing intimate partner violence in the Bow Valley. Although the shelter and sexualized assault projects are complimentary and involve many of the same community partners, the results of both research projects will inform the direction of the future programs and resources.

About YWCA Banff

YWCA Banff is a community-based, social profit organization with over 100 years of experience in Banff and the Bow Valley. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, YWCA empowers women, girls and our community through leadership development, advocacy, and provision of relevant programming and services.

In pursuit of this mission YWCA Banff focuses on the following priorities:

- Respect for the human rights of women and girls.
- Advancing the leadership development of women and girls.
- Provide and advocate for suitable emergency and transitional housing, and permanent affordable housing.
- A sustainable community-based organization.

More information at www.ywcabanff.ca

Media Contact

Connie MacDonald, CEO

YWCA Banff

E: Connie@ywcabanff.ca

T: 403-760-3215

References:

<http://aasas.ca/fact-sheets/>