

## **YWCA BANFF ANNOUNCES VINEart GALA AUCTION**

### ***Elegant Evening of Food, Wine and Art to benefit Bow Valley Women's Emergency Shelter***

**January 22, 2016 – Canmore, AB** – YWCA Banff is pleased to announce the second annual VINEart Gala & Auction, March 19, 2016 at Silvertip Resort in Canmore, to benefit the short and long terms goals of the Bow Valley Women's Emergency Shelter including the development of a new shelter facility.

The Bow Valley Women's Emergency Shelter (BVWES) is the only local resource dedicated to supporting and housing women and their children who are fleeing violent situations. Supportive counselling is also available for women who seek support for domestic abuse, but remain in their homes.

"Last year we announced an ambitious goal. We plan to build or acquire a more suitable facility to support victims of domestic abuse. As part of our plan, we continue to educate our community about the impact of violence and how shelter services can help to build resiliency and support for women and children who experience violence in their homes," said YWCA CEO, Connie MacDonald.

In preparation for the second annual VINEart Gala Auction, the shelter is focusing their educational efforts on the impacts that domestic violence has on children. "Research shows that witnessing family violence is as harmful as experiencing it directly, and exposure to violence can affect how a child's brain develops and ability to learn, which can lead to a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues," explains MacDonald.

As part of the event's education and outreach, Lorinda Stewart is back as the event's honorary chair. And this year, Lorinda will highlight the importance of providing supports to children who witness violence in the home, based on the experiences of her family. "We are so fortunate to have Lorinda as our spokesperson again," says MacDonald. "She is an eloquent and powerful voice for survivors of violence and we are grateful that she is able to share her personal experience so generously to help other women."

The Black Tie Optional event will again be an evening of fine dining, live music and an auction of exceptional art and wine experiences. Silvertip Resort's Executive Chef, Laura Hansford will be collaborating with other renowned female chefs from the Bow Valley to create a four course culinary experience with specially selected wine pairings.

The auction will feature live bidding for an array of unique packages pairing art and wine in amazing locations.

Tickets are \$250 per person and \$2400 per table of 10.

More information, tickets, and updated auction item information is available at [www.vineartgala.ca](http://www.vineartgala.ca).

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## **About the Bow Valley Women's Emergency Shelter**

The Bow Valley Women's Emergency Shelter (BVWES) is the only local resource dedicated to supporting and facilitating safe housing women and their children who are fleeing violent situations. The Shelter is operated by the YWCA with support from other community agencies including Bow Valley Victim Services and the RCMP. Services include safety planning, referrals, counselling, access to food and clothing, and a safe place to stay for women and their children.

The BVWES has only one fully dedicated space to serve women in the Bow Valley. In the last fiscal year, 20 women and 17 children accessed the shelter spending a cumulative total of 495 bed nights. Another 25 women received outreach services and support for domestic abuse related issues. Almost 60% of all shelter and outreach services were provided to women with children.

Unfortunately the Bow Valley has no access locally to suitable transition housing for women who require a place to stay after leaving shelter. This often forces abused women to leave their community and their job and adds significant barriers to their transition to a life that is free of violence. The lack of transition housing also adds additional stress to impacted children when their social networks and support systems are no longer available.

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