

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Howe Sound Women's Centre Society Receives \$25,000 Commitment
To Fund Girl's Summer Day Camps Over Next Five Years**

SQUAMISH, BC (October 12, 2016) Howe Sound Women's Centre Society is pleased to announce private funder Vankerk Solutions will be providing financial support for the annual Girl's Summer Day Camps in Squamish and Whistler for the next five years. Vankerk Solutions has committed \$5,000/year for the next five years to cover the operational cost of the camp and ensure access for families in need. The Girl's Summer Day Camps are focused on connecting with nature, building friendships and empowerment for young girls aged 8 – 11.

"The Girl's Summer Day Camps provide a safe, supported environment for self-expression and self-care, and this is something that really resonates for me," says Niki Vankerk, principal of Vankerk Solutions. "When young girls engage in activities they wouldn't normally do, it encourages them to see beyond limitations and feel empowered to pursue their dreams."

The two Girl's Summer Day Camps run for five consecutive days in Squamish and Whistler in July of each year. The camps include a significant amount of time spent in nature: playing, hiking, doing nature art, and creating shared experiences that foster healthy relationships. The goal of the camps is to counter the reduction in self-esteem experienced by young girls as they enter their teenage years. The week-long camps cost \$195/person, with subsidies available to those in need.

"This program is near and dear to the hearts of our staff," says Megan Reynolds, executive director with Howe Sound Women's Centre Society. "Yet year after year, we are faced with the challenge of finding the resources to make it happen. To be able to look ahead to the next five years and know, without a doubt, that the Girl's Summer Day Camps are an inherent part of our programming, is just so exciting for us. We hope that through the friendships and community connections made, these young women grow up to know we are here to support them, no matter what challenges may come."

Funding for the first year of the Girl's Summer Day Camps was matched by private donor Clasina van Bommel as part of Howe Sound Women's Centre Society's 35 Day Community Fundraising Challenge.

For more information, visit www.hswc.ca.

About Howe Sound Women's Centre Society

The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society is a purpose driven charitable organization serving the Sea to Sky Community for 35 years. The Women's Centre is focused on supporting women, children and youth who are in need of emergency shelter, support, referrals and advocacy, and in particular, those who are experiencing high conflict, violence or abuse. The Women's Centre offers emergency housing through Pearl's Place Transition House and Pearl's Safe Home, children and youth focused programs such as 'Children Who Witness Abuse' counselling, 'Working Through Separation and Divorce' counselling, and 'Violence is Preventable' education, multicultural outreach, and health and wellness programs. The Squamish and Whistler Women's Centres receive over 3,800 visits annually. The Women's Centre also operates Pearl's Value & Vintage, a second hand thrift store selling gently used and vintage goods, with all proceeds from sales supporting Howe Sound Women's Centre Society programs. For more information, visit www.hswc.ca.

About Vankerk Solutions Inc.

Vankerk Solutions is a boutique Salesforce.com implementation firm operating out of Pemberton, BC, that specializes in helping small/medium business make the most of their Salesforce system. Vankerk Solutions works with companies within a wide range of industries to refine sales and support processes and customize Salesforce.com to align with their strategy. Principal Niki Vankerk also sits on the Board of Directors with Howe Sound Women's Centre Society.

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