

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **“Don’t Be That Guy” Campaign Launches In Whistler**

WHISTLER, BC (January 14, 2014) In light of recent sexual assaults, Howe Sound Women’s Centre Society, Whistler Community Services Society, and the Whistler RCMP have partnered with the Whistler Bar Group to launch the “Don’t Be That Guy” campaign in Whistler. The campaign is a sexual assault prevention initiative to address the issue of alcohol-facilitated sexual assault in our community.

Posters depicting strong visuals and messaging that sex without consent constitutes sexual assault will appear in men’s washrooms in bars and pubs throughout Whistler. The goal of the campaign is to promote awareness, responsible behavior, and consent. The posters shifts focus from the victim to the perpetrator, holding potential offenders accountable.

“According to the Ministry of Public Safety Solicitor General’s publication of BC Crime Trends from 2000-2009, there were 53.4 sexual offences in the Sea to Sky Corridor per year,” says Sheila Allen, executive director of Howe Sound Women’s Centre Society. “Given adjustments for population size, that represents 172 offences per 100,000 people, which is a rate almost three times greater than urban centres such as Richmond and the North Shore. We need to continue our focus on awareness and prevention of this traumatic crime.”

“This initiative aligns with the values of our industry,” says Joey Gibbons, owner of Gibbons Hospitality Group, and representative of the Whistler Bar Group. “We must be leaders in creating more awareness around the issue of alcohol-facilitated sexual assault, and be aggressive in our efforts to target would-be perpetrators before sexual assaults occur.”

The “Don’t Be That Guy” campaign was developed by Sexual Assault Voices of Edmonton (“SAVE”) in response to growing incidents of sexual assault. The success of the campaign has led to launches in Calgary, Vancouver, and now Whistler. Vancouver Police Deputy Chief Doug LePard attributes the campaign to a 10 percent decrease in reported sexual assaults in Vancouver in 2011, the first year the campaign ran in the city.<sup>1</sup>

Victims of sexual assault can access any of the following resources for support:

Howe Sound Women’s Centre 24 Hour Crisis Line: 1-877-890-5711

Women Against Violence Against Women 24 Hour Rape Crisis Line: 1-877-392-7583

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Matas, ‘Don’t Be That Guy’ ad campaign cuts Vancouver sex assaults by 10 per cent in 2011, The Globe and Mail, 2012.

Stopping the Violence Counselling and Outreach (Squamish) 604-892-5796  
(Whistler, Pemberton, First Nations communities north of Pemberton) 1-877-894- 6106

RCMP Victim Services: Squamish 604-892-6100 | Whistler 604-905-1969

Whistler Community Services Society: 604-932-0113

VictimLink BC 24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-563-0808

B.C. Women's Sexual Assault Service (Vancouver General Hospital): 1-604-875-2881

### **About The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society**

The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society is a charitable organization that has been serving the Sea to Sky Community for 32 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 have experienced violence in relationships. The Women's Centre offers emergency housing through Pearl's Place Transition Home and Pearl's Safe Home, children and youth focused programs such as Children Who Witness Abuse counselling and Violence is Preventable education, multicultural outreach, and health and wellness programs such as yoga and meditation. The Squamish and Whistler Women's Centres receive over 5,500 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](http://www.hswc.ca).

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