

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Howe Sound Women's Centre Society Awarded \$20,000 In Consulting Support From Social Enterprise Heroes

SQUAMISH, BC (April 28, 2014) The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society was awarded \$20,000 in consulting expertise at the annual Social Enterprise Heroes event in Vancouver on April 16. The prize consists of \$10,000 of in-kind services from JDQ Systems Inc. and 100 hours of consulting from ASQ Vancouver to support inventory process improvements at Pearl's Value & Vintage, the society's second hand thrift store located in Squamish, BC.

"We are thrilled with the opportunity to share our story of successful social entrepreneurship, and with the support of BC's social enterprise community to help us take it to the next level," says Sheila Allen, executive director with the Howe Sound Women's Centre Society. "These consulting services will enable us to implement new processes to manage the receiving, sorting and merchandising of donations received at Pearl's Value & Vintage, and provide training to our valued employees and volunteers on these new processes. With these improvements, we will continue to offer quality, gently used goods and excellent customer service, but at an optimal level. This is really important for us given the proceeds from the store go back to our programs to help women and children in our community."

The Squamish store was selected as one of three social enterprises in the province to compete for \$55,000 in grants and expertise needed to grow their business and boost social impact. The teams faced off in front of a team of judges and a live audience of 150 people. Other challengers included Beaufort Association's Pet Treat Bakery from Courtenay, which employs adults with intellectual disabilities, and The Cleaning Solution, a commercial cleaning social enterprise from Vancouver that provides employment for people living with mental illness. The Pet Treat Bakery was awarded grants totalling \$15,000 to purchase new equipment, and The Cleaning Solution was awarded \$20,000 in consulting support. The event is part of an annual day of learning and social enterprise celebration hosted by enterprising non-profits (ENP).

Preparation for the event included a meet and greet with judges, coaches, and contestants in February. Each contestant was assigned a team of coaches specializing in social enterprise development, who supported them in defining their most pressing operational challenge and articulating this challenge in their final 'pitch' presentation. Each team had 9 minutes, followed by a brief 6 minute question and answer period, to convince the judges to invest in their social enterprise. The entire process was documented on video, and will be featured on TELUS' Optik TV community channel in late May.

About The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society

The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society is a for purpose 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 are victims of violence. 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, Working Through Separation and Divorce counselling, and Violence is Preventable education, multicultural outreach, and health and wellness programs and workshops. 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.

About enterprising non-profits

Enterprising Non-Profits (enp) is a collaborative program that helps build healthy communities by supporting the development of successful social enterprise. Since 1997 enp has delivered workshops to over 3,000 people and close to 1,800 organizations. enp has awarded more than 490 grants worth over \$3 million for business development projects to BC charities.

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