

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Howe Sound Women's Centre Society Raises \$57,702 In 35 Day Community Fundraising Challenge

SQUAMISH, BC (October 7, 2016) Howe Sound Women's Centre Society has raised \$57,702 in donations with the 35 Day Community Fundraising Challenge. The fundraising campaign was part of the society's 35th Anniversary celebration, whereby private donor Clasina van Bemmell committed to match funds raised by the community, up to \$35,000. Community donations totaled \$22,702 over the 35 day period, and Ms. van Bemmell surprised the community by donating the full \$35,000.

"This campaign was a pivotal one for us," says Megan Reynolds, executive director with Howe Sound Women's Centre Society. "In addition to celebrating the significant milestone of 35 years of service, it was really meaningful for community members to have their funds matched. We saw a lot of enthusiasm for the concept, from the Walk a Mile In Her Shoes participants, to Quest Students, Squamish Rotary members, Squamish Savings, private businesses, and private donors. The 'Stories of Impact' each day also provided context from those with lived experience as to why our programs and services are needed. We are so grateful to Clasina for her generosity and enthusiasm throughout the campaign."

Funds donated by Clasina van Bemmell are designated for long term housing for women, youth and children fleeing violence, and the balance of the funds will support underfunded programs, including the Squamish and Whistler Drop-In Centres, and the Children Who Witness Abuse Counselling program.

Howe Sound Women's Centre hosted an Anniversary Open House, which included a cheque presentation from Ms. van Bemmell. District of Squamish Acting Mayor Susan Chappelle and Whistler's Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden were in attendance, along with other donors, supporters, board members and staff. The Squamish Drop-In Centre was converted into a mini-theatre for the screening of two films highlighting historical milestones in the feminist movement: Suffragette and She's Beautiful When She's Angry.

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 3,850 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 Clasina van Bommel

Clasina van Bommel is an entrepreneur, philanthropist, author and artist residing in Nanaimo, BC. She founded the bus company West Coast City and Nature Sightseeing and The Vancouver Trolley Company, offering tours using streetcar-style trolleys. Upon retirement, Clasina pursued the arts and graduated from Capilano College Art Institute in May 2003. Her large steel sculptures have been on display at several locations in BC and Ohio. Her memoir 'Eating Sugarcane' tells the story of a lifelong journey of childhood violence and abuse to spirituality and healing. In 2014, Clasina donated \$140,865 to Howe Sound Women's Centre Society as a community amenities contribution in conjunction with the District of Squamish for the support of long term housing for women, youth and children fleeing violence and abuse.

Photo:

(L) Clasina van Bommel, Whistler Mayor Nancy Wilhelm-Morden, Megan Reynolds (HSWC Executive Director), Karen Millard (President, HSWC Board of Directors), Jessie Cameron (Vice President, HSWC Board of Directors), Jeannine Bradshaw (Director, HSWC Board of Directors), District of Squamish Acting Mayor Susan Chappelle.

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