

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Howe Sound Women's Centre Society And Squamish Savings Announce
New Community Partnership And Funding For Youth Education Program**

SQUAMISH, BC (January 8, 2015) The Howe Sound Women's Centre Society and Squamish Savings, a division of Vancity, are pleased to announce a new community partnership, which is highlighted by the renewed funding support for the 'Violence is Preventable' Youth Education Program. The community partnership comes as part of a new strategic focus for the Squamish Savings Advisory Board, whereby the two organizations will work together to build the capacity, awareness and understanding needed to overcome systemic issues related to violence against women and how gender violence impacts our communities.

The partnership model represents an integrated approach to non-profit sustainability by providing Howe Sound Women's Centre with additional access to financial support, non-profit management training, social enterprise expertise, community project grants, sponsorship opportunities, and staff volunteers. Howe Sound Women's Centre is one of three non-profit agencies that will work with Squamish Savings in this capacity.

"This approach is part of Vancity's 'Hand out, hand up, hands together' philosophy that suggests the most transformational impact happens when we put our hands together with an organization to create lasting change," says Dave Thomson, the chair of the Squamish Savings Advisory Board. "We are proud to announce our long term support of the Howe Sound Women's Centre Society, and demonstrate our commitment to standing beside them in their fight to end gender violence in our community, and society as a whole."

"This type of partnership is pivotal for us as a society, and we are thrilled to see Squamish Savings taking a leadership role to develop community partnerships that transcend the traditional models of non-profit funding," says Sheila Allen, executive director with Howe Sound Women's Centre Society. "By providing access to the ongoing strategic support, financial expertise, and human resource capital that aligns with our vision, we are better positioned to make a lasting impact. This community partnership takes us one step closer to achieving our vision of a violence-free future."

To kick off the community partnership, Squamish Savings will provide \$8,000 in grant support for the 'Violence is Preventable' Youth Education Program. This marks the 4th year that Squamish Savings has supported the program, which offers a series of workshops focusing on healthy relationships, the prevention of sexual exploitation, boundary setting and anti-bullying, and provides teens with information that will inform their choices on peer relationships and technology safety. The workshops are part of the Grade 10 Planning curriculum for nearly 500 students throughout the Sea to Sky Corridor, including Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton and Mount Currie. The workshops will begin in the spring of 2015.

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 33 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 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.

Squamish Savings is a Division of Vancity. About Vancity:

Vancity is a values-based financial co-operative serving the needs of its more than 501,000 member-owners and their communities through 58 branches in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Victoria and Squamish. As Canada's largest community credit union, Vancity uses its \$17.5 billion in assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while at the same time helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Photo credit: Dave Thomson

Media contacts:

Sheila Allen, Executive Director

T: 604-892-5748

E: ed@hswc.ca

Dave Thomson

Board Chair, Squamish Savings Advisory Board

T: 604-848-8907

E: dave.thomson@squamishsavings.com