

### The New Face of PACE



Hello and happy New Year to our friends and allies of PACE! It is with great enthusiasm that we launch our first edition of our

newsletter for 2011 and update you on our successes, trials and tribulations of 2010. PACE is a sex worker led and driven organization offering low-barrier programming, support and safe respite for survival sex workers in Vancouver. We stand at the front line of support for survival sex workers in Vancouver.

At the helm of our organization is Executive Director, Kerry Porth, who was promoted to this leadership role in the fall of 2009. Kerry is a dedicated individual who works tirelessly to advocate with and on the behalf of sex workers to lessen social stigma around sex work, for the recognition of sex workers' human rights and for safer working conditions. Kerry is also a PACE success story who first came to us as a client in the fall of 2004 when she was exiting sex work and in early recovery from drug addiction.

In other news, we have updated our logo and bylaws to better reflect our evolving politics and goals. We also changed our name! Previously *Prostitution Alternatives Counselling & Education* we are now *Providing Alternatives Counselling & Education* and, as always, we are by sex workers, for sex workers.

In addition to our new name and logo, our website has been given a complete makeover and you can check it out at [www.pace-society.ca](http://www.pace-society.ca) You can find everything you need to know about PACE, our staff, board, events, projects as well as making a secure, on-line donation.

### A Big Thank You to Our Donors

Thank you for your continued support of PACE throughout 2010. Donors are always a crucial and valued source of support for PACE and its services, especially in times of extreme need. 2010 was such a time when gaps in and cuts to our funding caused a serious financial crisis. By August, we faced the reality of seriously cutting our services. As a last resort, we sent out a call for help and our donors responded with swift action. Thanks to your donations we raised approximately \$5,000! With this sum, we were able to keep our lights on, our door open and our staff available to members. In addition, these funds enabled us to throw a great Christmas party ... more about that on page 4. Thank you again!

PACE 2011 Agendas are hot off the press! Please contact us if you'd like to purchase one for \$20



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### 2010 Annual General Meeting

PACE Society held its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting this past October, with PACE staff, Board of Directors, over twenty of our members and various community allies in attendance.

We passed some very important resolutions and had the opportunity to discuss matters that have impacted us over 2010.

Highlights and successes from PACE Society in 2010 included the provision of the BELLE Aftercare Program for 6 months,



street outreach in Vancouver during the Winter Olympics, marching in the 2010 Pride Parade, PACE members' participation and performance in Stand Up For Mental Health, surviving through serious funding cutbacks and shortages, and making progress in the fight for the decriminalization of sex work in both the Ontario and BC Charter Challenges.

The PACE Board was re-elected unanimously for the 2010/11 year; Matthew Taylor (Chair), Natasha Wright (Vice Co-Chair), Karen Mirsky (Vice Co-Chair, Media Liaison), Ellexis Boyle (Media Liaison), Graham George (Treasurer), Rory Marck (Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator) Ellen Wiebe (Member at Large).

Former Board member Janelle O'Connor is worthy of PACE's undying gratitude for her stellar efforts in raising donations and representing PACE in the Endeavour Auction. The 2010 Endeavour Auction raised over \$13,000 for PACE!

Board of Directors Chair Matthew Taylor expressed many thanks on behalf of PACE for the wonderful work being done by the Board, Staff, fundraisers, donors, volunteers, Peer Workers and Charter Challengers.

The AGM was closed with a reading by author and former Board member Maggie de Vries from her memoir, Missing Sarah.

### In Her Own Words

*During the Vancouver Winter Olympics in February 2010, our members were asked to speak about their experiences in the sex trade and how PACE has had a positive impact on their lives.*

#### Chili Bean's Story

I've been in the sex trade for 12 years. I was 29 years old when I started; I'm from the Okanagan and a friend of mine asked me to come down to housesit. My friend was secretly in the sex trade. I drank then and she was supplying the booze and the food. One time I caught her doing rock in the bedroom. She kept going out every couple of hours and she finally told me she was addicted to crack and was a hooker. I was so sheltered from the prostitution and the poverty and the drugs in my small town that it hit me really hard when I found out my friend was a prostitute and addicted to drugs.

I got addicted to crack – the party was over and it was time for me to earn some money. I cried to my first dates and told them the story about why I was there. It was more of an addiction to the fast cash than the drugs.

Chili Bean's Story Cont'd

I've always been a rock star – no heroin- no needle in my arm. Then the girl who put me out on the street started to resent me because I got more attention than her.

Whenever I see other girls in my position – like there's a picture of a girl at WISH and she's talking to a guy in a car that is a hearse and it says "every ride could be her last" and that's true. Society tends to think it's glamorous; that we make easy money. The first five years were okay but then it wasn't fun anymore. It became a routine, a lifestyle, and a supporting habit for my rock.



Spouses push you to get out there because they want to smoke crack. I'm 43 and I still do work but I have a sugar daddy now. It is strange, my life. From the goodie-two-shoes girl to

the girl on the corner smoking crack. I never would have thought this would happen.

I'm slowly exiting the sex trade. I am very political for women and welfare rights and addictions in the Downtown Eastside. I'm hanging up my hooking shoes and doing outreach. We need more women who have been there, done that. I can say I've been there, done that. That's what is great about PACE – they've been there, done that. I'd like to help more, not be on the corner anymore. I'm on the Board of WISH and the Board of DTES Women's Centre. I'm finding others things to occupy my mind and myself – drugs aren't fulfilling me anymore. If I had to do it all over again I wouldn't have taken the path that I did – there has been a lot of hurt and pain involved.

I've had four bad dates – one guy I took to court and he only got nine months. Now I'm helping the girls and saying if I can do it you girls can too – all it takes is wanting a change of lifestyle. It is always the spouses that want to keep you out there. I'm glad I got rid of him – if I didn't I would be chasing that rock 24/7.

I did a safety project here at PACE with Sheri which was really awesome. It was a workshop that was a few weeks long and it helped me a lot as far as safety for women in the sex trade. They even taught us self-defense, which I could have used a long time ago. For three hours we got sit and answer phones here at PACE – stuff we could put on a resume; if I want to get a job outside the sex trade, it helps. There are a few things I've done here that I could easily put on a resume. Linda (Malcolm, VPD Sex Work Liaison Officer) and PACE have helped me put together bad date reports. PACE is a very comfortable place. I know the people and I feel comfortable doing stuff like that here – there isn't the authoritative environment; if it were any other surroundings I wouldn't have done bad date reports.

I'm waiting to do the BELLE Project – I've heard so many good things about it. With PACE's help I've become more independent and self-sufficient. I'm not so intimidated by people or situations. Before I would take the long way around or ignore or avoid it. But now I can go head on with issues and people because of the self-esteem and assertiveness workshops. Being in the sex trade takes your self-esteem...you lose all of it because men make you feel so little but PACE made me feel big again. I have really come out of my shell. PACE has been there to help me through all of it.

### 2010 Christmas Party

Each year, starting in early November, PACE puts the word out to our friends and allies for help in making a memorable Christmas party for our members. This can be a very difficult time of year for our members, many of whom have been estranged from their families for years. Sharing food, singing carols, enjoying a few laughs with us and, of course, getting a special present can really lift spirits.

Once donations come in, staff (Sheri and Alka, pictured below) spend a minimum of one whole day to ensure that each member receives a bag full of goodies.



Useful goodies like warm mittens, a warm hat and scarf and treats such as scented lotions. This year, due to the extraordinary generosity of Maureen and Jack Wilson, each member received premium Peter Lamas shampoo and conditioner.

Board members and volunteers provided all the sides for a scrumptious ham dinner and even our Executive Director who NEVER cooks, rolled up her sleeves to cook the hams.

And, thanks to the generosity of our allies, each member received a door prize as well.

### Toronto Charter Challenge



*Executive Director Kerry Porth (with Katrina Pacey of Pivot Legal Society) speaking at a press conference regarding the Toronto Charter Challenge.*

### BELLE Graduation

BELLE or *Beautiful Experiential Life Links to Empowerment* was an 18-month support group program. Participants enjoyed a pizza lunch at their graduating ceremony in July of 2010.



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