



For Immediate Release
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BC's First 'One-Day Count': Programs for Women Fleeing Violence Help Thousands Daily

Vancouver, BC – A report released today shows that 1889 people used programs for women, youth and children fleeing violence offered in British Columbia and Yukon on one day in 2009. The “24 Hour Census Report”, released by the BC Society of Transition Houses, provides information from the first one-day survey of Transitional Housing and Children Who Witness Abuse programs in BC and the Yukon. The new 24 hour census will help provide a more accurate picture of how many people are using these services and identify barriers to getting support.

Shabna Ali, Executive Director of BC Society of Transition Houses said the one day survey is a more accurate tool to ensure that no one is counted more than once, as can happen in monthly or annual tallies. “119 Transitional Housing and Children Who Witness Abuse programs participated in our first 24 Hour Census”, said Ali. “The programs helped 819 people in person, another 850 over the phone and educated 230 people about violence against women.”

Although the programs assisted 1899 people in one day, they also turned away 522 women, youth and children. According to the report, many of the reasons people were turned away involved limited resources, funding and staff for these support programs. A Transition House staff member citing budget constraints as a problem said "There is a food budget of \$4 per person at a transition house per day after all other expenses are allocated."

With a focus on only BC programs this year, BC Society of Transition Houses is aiming to get more organizations involved in their second annual 24 Hour Census, taking place in November. “We hope this will help British Columbians better understand the important work that community social services do. Programs for women, youth and children fleeing violence are a necessary part of what we need to keep our communities safe. When 522 people are turned away in just one day, we all need to act to ensure that women, youth and children fleeing violence in our communities have access to services when they need it most.”

BC Society of Transition Houses is a non- profit society representing Transitional Housing, Children Who Witness Abuse programs and other groups for women, youth and children fleeing violence in BC. Transitional Housing programs provide support and advocacy and short term shelter for women and their children who are fleeing violence. Children Who Witness Abuse Programs help youth between the ages of 3 and 18 understand and cope with family violence and the effects the violence has on themselves. The full report is available on the BC Society of Transition Houses website www.bcsth.ca.