

February 8, 2011

20th Annual Feb 14th Women's Memorial March - 12 noon Feb 14th in Vancouver

Website: <http://womensmemorialmarch.wordpress.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=264380380945>

Please share this notice with your friends, family, and networks

The first women's memorial march was held in 1991 in response to the murder of a woman on Powell Street in Vancouver. Her name is not spoken today out of respect for the wishes of her family. Out of this sense of hopelessness and anger came an annual march on Valentine's Day to express compassion, community, and caring for all women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Coast Salish Territories. Twenty years later, the women's memorial march continues to honour the lives of missing and murdered women.

On Feb 14th, we will gather at the Carnegie Community Centre Theatre, 401 Main Street (at the corner of Hastings in Vancouver) where family members speak in remembrance. At 1 pm, the march takes to the streets and proceeds through the Downtown Eastside, with stops to commemorate where women were last seen or found; speeches by community activists at the police station; a healing circle at Oppenheimer Park around 3 pm; and finally a community feast at the Japanese Language Hall.

This event is organized and led by women in the DTES because women, especially indigenous women, face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis.

Increasing deaths of many vulnerable women from the DTES still leaves family, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Over 3000 women are known to have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since the 1970s. Two years ago, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women issued this statement: Hundreds of cases involving aboriginal women who have gone missing or been murdered in the past two decades have neither been fully investigated nor attracted priority attention. The February 14th Women's Memorial March is an opportunity to come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice.

SUPPORT THE WOMENS MEMORIAL MARCH

There are many ways to support the Annual Women's Memorial March:

1) Join us. Please join us (all genders welcome) to our events and to the Feb 14th march. We respectfully ask that you please do not bring your banners, flags, or leaflets as the Women's Memorial March carries five banners only to honour the women.

2) Plan a memorial march in your community. We encourage women in other cities and communities to journey and heal together by organizing memorials on this day because women face violence on a daily basis. Last year, memorial marches were held in approximately ten other cities and communities. If you are organizing a memorial march please email us the details at marlene.george@vancouver.ca This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it, so we can maintain communication, compile the information on our website, and build strength in our coordinated efforts.

3) Organize an event. If you are a community centre, youth association, union, women's group, educational institution, Indigenous organization, social justice collective, or artist space in the Lower Mainland and want to host an event during Feb 1-Feb 14, we encourage you to do so and to contact us. We can provide suggestions for speakers or films for your event, and we support a wide spectrum of individuals and groups raising awareness about the issue of missing and murdered women. We are compiling events on our website, so please email us details of your event at hwalia8@gmail.com

4) Please donate. The February 14th Women's Memorial March is made possible by organizations and individuals like you. Each year the Memorial March committee must raise funds to pay for such things as hall rental, sound system, food, red & yellow roses, memorial brochures, blankets, posters, candles, tobacco and other expenses. Please make cheques payable to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and include Women's Memorial March on the memo line. Mail cheques to the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, 302 Columbia St. Vancouver, BC V6A 4J1. All donations over \$10 will be gratefully acknowledged with a tax deductible receipt.

Violence against women is always unacceptable; every life is precious and we must continue to honour and work for justice for murdered and missing women.

Thank you all for your support and commitment,

Women's Memorial March Committee