

Counselling Impact Lasts a Lifetime

As Alison Campbell heads into retirement she thinks back on how integral the Centre was in getting her career started.



Victoria lawyer Alison Campbell

Alison Campbell has been a successful lawyer in Victoria for many years, helping Victorians with their legal issues, such as handling divorce and custody matters, real estate transactions, writing wills, or anything else that came her way. As Alison finally heads into retirement this year, at the age of 69, she recently reflected that if it hadn't been for Citizens' Counselling, the career that's she's passionately pursued for the past thirty years might never have happened.

"I nearly didn't make it through first year law," she recalls, "I was a mature student at 39, and I'd sailed through high school, and worked in different jobs, for several years as a legal secretary, which was how

I'd decided to train as a lawyer. I'd never doubted myself before. But law school was different; I was overwhelmed with the workload and I experienced a crisis in confidence. As I started the first set of exams, I fell ill and could hardly crawl out of bed. I was more-or-less paralyzed. I delayed writing my exams, and felt like the rug had been pulled out from under me. I didn't know who I was anymore, and I was terrified. I was ready to give up law, thinking there was no way I could get through due

to the state I was in. Then a friend told me about Citizens' Counselling, and I made that important phone call to the Centre. Like most students I was struggling financially, and I could never have afforded to pay a professional. Citizens' paired me with a wonderful counsellor who helped me through my crisis. She helped me recognize my episodes of 'paralysis' for the panic attacks they actually were, and she taught me strategies to cope with my anxiety. I learned how to ask for help. For example, because my first panic attack had been triggered after the first exam, the law school allowed me to write exams in a separate room away from the distractions of the other students.

Gradually, with the help of counselling, my anxiety lessened, and I was able to cope again. I continued to see the counsellor for about twelve weeks, after which I had my confidence back and I knew how to deal with my anxieties, so I didn't need her support any more."

Cont'd on page 3

We're Making a Difference

We'd like to share some testimonials from recent clients

"She made me feel welcome and not judged. She let her personality show through her work, she was kind and a great listener... she was great at identifying certain

body language that at points, I was doing sub-consciously and by addressing them I was able to be more aware. And funny!"

"She helped me change my life and outlook. I am fortunate to have had an incredible experience with such an incredible person. She has inspired me and I hope that one day I can give back to the community as she has. Thank you for the opportunity to make my life better. One of the best choices I have made."

"The counselling helped me to think and approach problem areas differently. It helped me to become aware and appreciate the value of setting attainable goals and to not set myself up for failure by taking on too much at once and giving up. I was able to talk through some past issues that affect me still and understand why it is hard to get past it."

"She was very helpful in asking the right questions to help me come to my own conclusions. She did not put words in my mouth but helped me to find my own. She noticed if I was anxious, sad, helpless or angry and helped me discover what exactly were the reasons behind what I was feeling. She was exactly what I needed."

"Thank you so much for offering counselling services on a sliding scale. Victoria is an expensive city and access to resources related to health and well-being can be difficult for people without insurance/medical benefits and/or who are on a low income."

**Citizens
COUNSELLING
CENTRE**



Assisting adult community members in attaining socially and psychologically satisfying lives by providing quality, accessible, volunteer counselling services.

Gifts-in-Kind are Truly Kind

Local businesses help out the Centre

Cordova Bay Golfers Tee-up for the Centre

A business owner, who prefers to remain anonymous, has helped the Centre out immeasurably in the last year by donating computers and a photocopier. The Centre was desperately in need of upgraded equipment, so these gifts were timely and much appreciated. The other wonderful thing about the gift was the service that the donor's company provided, and continues to provide, at a generously discounted rate. Brenda Wilson, Citizens' ED, states, "In dollars and cents, these gifts have saved the Centre thousands of dollars. In kindness and generosity terms, they are priceless."

We have ideas as to how you can help

If you are a business owner and would like to donate a gift-in-kind, please call Brenda at 250-384-2934 to discuss the Centre's current needs.

Travelling? Think of the Centre

Board member and Centre-trained counsellor Derek Collins has made a very generous offer. He is willing to donate 10% of the premium for any travel insurance or cancellation insurance purchased through him by anyone who says they heard about this through Citizens' Counselling. Family, friends, co-workers – please send them his way. Derek is an independent insurance broker and all insurance is provided and underwritten through Manulife Insurance. Derek gives an example of a trip recently purchased where the client wanted cancellation insurance in case either he or his wife got sick. The trip cost \$6000, the insurance cost \$300. 10% of that premium would have gone to CCC. Derek can be contacted Mon-Fri. at 250-216-7103. An added bonus – all of this can be done over the telephone.

Thanks to the leadership of Deb Carnes, one of our volunteer counsellors, the Cordova Bay Ladies Golf Club donated \$1350 to Citizens' in October. This most welcome gift was the proceeds from special events, tournaments and 50/50 draws.

Deb is on the executive of the Ladies Club, and when it came time to choose an annual charity, she was able to make a convincing case for the Centre. As a counsellor and as an intake interviewer for couples counselling, she has seen first hand the value of the Centre's services to the community. In addition, it turned out that a couple of members of the club had received counselling through the Centre.



When presenting the cheque to Brenda Wilson at a meeting of the club, Deb was able to paint a compelling picture of the role of volunteer counsellors at the Centre. After her presentation, a number of members asked her about how they could get involved as volunteer counsellors.

Thanks for being a great ambassador for Citizens,' Deb!

We'd love to hear from you!

If you belong to a service club or organization, and would like to include Citizens' in your charitable endeavours, please call Brenda Wilson at 250-384-2934. We'd be happy to provide a guest speaker and/or information about the Centre.

Diamond for the Centre's Jewel of an ED!



Brenda receives the Diamond Jubilee Medal from MP Denise Savoie with Victoria Mayor Fortin looking on.

On August 31 Brenda Wilson was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of her contributions to mental health services in our community. She was doubly honoured to receive the award from retiring MP Denise Savoie on her last official day as an MP.

In her thirty-two years at Citizens,' Brenda's clear and steadfast vision, strong financial management skills, and quiet activism have enabled the Centre to provide life-changing services to thousands of individuals.

We know that Brenda is never one to seek recognition for herself, so we thank her for graciously accepting her award. If it had been the Academy Awards, Brenda would have made a long speech about the entire team at Citizens'!

Look for us on social media

You'll find our Facebook page at facebook.com/CitizensCounselling and we're on Twitter at: twitter.com/GVCCC. Check in on Sunday mornings as we post what we think are interesting articles about personal growth and happiness.



Making it Work - the Bottom Line

We have worked hard over the last three years to diversify our income sources. We are proud of our ability to generate revenue from a variety of sources so that we are less vulnerable when one or more sources declines or disappears.

Our current revenue sources are:

- * Grants (48%)
- * Counselling fees (23%)
- * Donations (11%)
- * Rental income (10%)
- * Practicums (8%)

Despite our best efforts, we continue to experience a lot of uncertainty financially, as revenue for almost all of these categories is down. The forecast about three quarters of the way through our fiscal year is to end the fiscal year, March 31, 2013, with a deficit for the first time in over 30 years.

On the bright side of things we received a small grant (\$5,000) from Greenshield Canada to go forward with a Couples Training which will start in January and which will replenish our couples



counsellor numbers. We just received notice from the Victoria Foundation that we were successful in our grant application for \$30,000, which is an enormous boost to our bottom line. We have been a community partner with the United Way for decades and they continue to support us. We currently have a three-year partnership in place at \$45,000 each year. This kind of multi-year funding is invaluable as it allows us some ability to plan for the future.

And individual donors are stepping up, thanks to last year's very successful Face-to-Face campaign.

Our practicum program will see a record number of students from nine different Master's level programs complete their practicum placement with us. We now charge for these placements.

And we never lack for clients (is that good news or bad?) but stats show that 10% more of our clients are in the lowest fee category this year (\$0-\$7/session) as compared to last year. We are pleased that we can continue to provide them with services but the result is yet another revenue category that is unlikely to meet the goal set last Spring.

We're working hard and we're delivering great results – 84% of clients from April-September of 2012 who completed a post counselling evaluation reported moderate to significant change. We're getting some funding, but we still need your help.

Counselling Impact cont'd

Alison says she has continued to practice the strategies she learned all those years ago, when the need has arisen. For example, when she goes to court to represent a client, she still practices deep breathing and meditation exercises to centre and calm herself. "Appearing in Court is always a nerve-racking experience for me," she says, "but thanks to what I learned through Citizens' I've not only coped, but I've actually enjoyed the experience of going to court. Very early in my career I had to go before the BC Court of Appeal, which was terrifying, but I was able to cope because of my strategies, and it was a wonderful feeling when I won for my client."

Another important outcome of Alison's experience at the Centre has been her strong desire to give back

"Citizens gave me the help I needed at a time of crisis in my life."

to her community. "Citizens gave me the help I needed at a time of crisis in my life. As a result I was able to complete my legal training, which has meant I have gone on to have a deeply satisfying career. I was determined to give back however I could." For Alison, that meant serving on the

Board at Citizens' Counselling Centre for three years, from '87-'91, and being a supporter of the Centre ever since. But Alison's commitment to the community didn't stop there. She has served on the board for AIDS Vancouver Island, Pacific Centre Family Services Association, as well as regular stints as legal aid duty counsel at the family court in Victoria, and represented many legal aid clients. "I do believe that anyone who becomes a professional should have some way of giving back," she says. "For me, serving others is a way of saying thank-you for the help I received when I needed it, and paying it forward."

We at Citizens' thank Alison for her commitment to the community and wish her a happy and active retirement.



We acknowledge the financial support of



United Way
OF GREATER VICTORIA
COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Province of British Columbia Gaming Commission



VICTORIA FOUNDATION

THRIFTY FOODS

gsc
green shield canada

And caring community members, like you

Friends of the Centre is published twice per year



The Kindness/Happiness Feedback Loop

Create a virtuous cycle that promotes lasting happiness and altruism

We've all heard the saying, especially at this time of year, "it is better to give than receive." It turns out that giving to others can create a "virtuous cycle that promotes lasting happiness and altruism." A recent article entitled "Kindness Makes You Happy... and Happiness Makes You Kind," published by the University of Berkeley, in its *Greater Good* newsletter, discusses this feedback loop.

The article cites two studies, one published in the *Journal of Social Psychology* and the other in the *Journal of Happiness*. While both studies took different approaches, the findings were similar.

People felt happier recalling times when they had spent money on someone else rather than on

themselves. And, the happier they were about their past generosity, the more likely they were to continue that practice in the present.

You'll find this and other interesting articles at www.greatergood.berkeley.edu

So, to all our kind and generous friends, remember how happy you felt when you gave a donation to Citizens' Counselling Centre. Your kindness helps us continue providing kindness to our very appreciative clients.

And, if you're feeling particularly kind, you can give to the Centre online through Canada Helps (there's a direct link on the About page of our website) or call our office 250.384.9934. Thank you.

"Kindness makes you happy... and happiness makes you kind"

Who volunteers at Citizens' and why?

This year's training program once again highlights the diverse group of citizens who make a big commitment to the ten month training program and then to 250 hours of counselling service back to the Centre. This year we have teachers and civil servants, a writer, a student, a stay at home mom, a body worker, administrative coordinators and a restaurant server. Here's a few of their responses to our question about why they want to train and to volunteer at Citizens'.

"I would like to help people with issues in the way that people in

my communities provided me with an open, accepting space and information to do my personal work. I want to pay it forward and be useful to my community in a deeper long-term way."

"Discovering the beliefs/conditioning behind people's actions/emotions is exciting and one of the greatest joys is working together towards transformation."

"As a new mom I'm eager to better myself so my son can grow up in a world surrounded by caring and compassionate individuals."

Your donation goes a long way!

100% of direct service to clients is provided by our trained volunteer counsellors.

\$1,000,000 is the market value of counselling services provided by trained volunteers

IN THIS PAST YEAR:

- over 8,000 HOURS OF SERVICES
- over 900 CLIENTS SERVED
- over 100 VOLUNTEER COUNSELLORS



The Citizens' Donation Certificate – a lovely way to recognize someone that you love. Please call us to find out more.

By the Month

By becoming a monthly donor to the Centre, you will make your life easier and help us demonstrate to funders that we have committed supporters. And, at the end of the year, making an annual donation is one thing you can cross off your to-do list!

It's easy to become a monthly donor:

1. Call our office (250-384-9934) and let us know that you'd like to start donating monthly.

OR

2. Go to our website and click on the DONATE button. This will connect you to Canada Helps, a non-profit organization that processes donations on behalf of charities like ours. Simply fill out their secure donation form and check off monthly donation. You'll receive a tax receipt at the end of the year, whatever method you choose.

Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

941 Kings Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 1W7 • 250.384.9934
info@citizenscounselling.com • www.citizenscounselling.com

Look for Citizens' Counselling Centre on

facebook