

#### MESSAGE FROM THE

## PRESIDENT Dr. Julie Ham

This message is a bittersweet one for me, as it marks the end of my term as President of SWAN's. Board. As I reflect on SWAN's growth and evolution over time, I remain in awe of what SWAN has been able to accomplish with the resources it's been given. I am extremely grateful and excited to see the new Board come on and have no doubt that they will continue SWAN's momentum.

Our new Board Members have joined the SWAN team just when they are needed most. The pandemic has profoundly affected how SWAN works and the communities we work with. As demanding as these challenges have been, it has been inspiring to see the SWAN team, our allies and the community strategize to keep sex workers and their families safe and well during the pandemic. A key part of this response has been the emergence of dynamic peer involvement to help ensure that any public interventions also include sex workers, their families and their communities.

This also includes continuing SWAN's work on racial justice. The past year has seen the rise of anti-Asian racism and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. Racial justice has always been a priority for SWAN, whether it is in revealing the use of antitrafficking measures to surveil and restrict migrants and racialized communities, countering crimmigration, or arguing for the inclusion of migrant, immigrant and racialized sex workers in the sex worker rights movement. SWAN has consistently challenged over-policing and harmful law enforcement measures and practices that contribute to the dehumanization of sex workers, and particularly sex workers from racialized communities. This year has reinforced the connections between health and social justice and as SWAN moves forward, social justice will remain central to SWAN's work.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE Alison Clancey

2019 was a significant year for SWAN. Covid-19 presented challenges we could have never imagined for the women who access our services. Meeting the community's needs took on new significance and ingenuity as staff worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. I commend our staff for the extra effort that ensured SWAN was able to provide services throughout Covid-19.

Despite the complexities Covid-19 presented, SWAN experienced considerable growth, most notably in organizational capacity. We completed a Strategic Plan that guides our work through to 2024, including several new organizational policies. A new website highlights the scope and nature of our work. With new funders, we were able to expand programs and hire new staff to meet growing demand.

With mixed emotions, I say goodbye to SWAN's long-serving operational board, who stepped aside to allow for a new governance board. I express heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Board members who dedicated countless hours of guidance over the years. Your commitment to social justice and community activism is unparalleled. I welcome the incoming Board and look forward to working with them in the coming years. With a new governance board and expanding staff team, SWAN is ready for the challenges and achievements ahead in 2020-2021.

I extend thanks to the donors, volunteers, community partners, and others who support SWAN to carry out its mandate each and every year. Finally, I thank the women who access our services for your ongoing trust and belief in SWAN, and in us.

allaniey



Under current sex work, anti-trafficking and immigration laws, marginalization, barriers to accessing healthcare and systemic vulnerability to violence are the reality for im/migrant sex workers. COVID-19 exacerbated these conditions and fueled major spikes in anti-Asian racism across the region.

Women's isolation and fears of deportation increased significantly as they feared government responses to the pandemic might include ramped up surveillance, or authorities' abuse of power under the guise of public safety.

Im/migrant
sex workers were among
the first to experience a
sudden & total loss of income
when COVID-19 hit.

SWAN's outreach services increased by 490% to meet the demand in March 2020.

Donors gave \$12,000 to SWAN's COVID-19 Relief Fund.

As a result, 55 women accessed financial support for immediate needs in March and April 2020.

While SWAN suspended outreach services for six weeks at the outset of the pandemic, services continued via phone, text and email. SWAN was well-positioned to avoid Netreach interruption due to the information and technology systems created in 2014 for our online outreach program.

SWAN provided prepaid cell phones and distributed personal protective equipment.

Informed by community consultations, SWAN produced bilingual resources, including eight webpages to address COVID misinformation and keep workers informed about their legal rights, financial options and public health orders.

In May, the Province lifted the Personal Services Public Health Order, which meant massage parlours were permitted to reopen.

Peers carried out community consultations to determine what women needed to be able to return to work safely. SWAN created a 19-page bilingual guide to respond to the questions that were asked.

Over four weeks in May & April 2020, SWAN created bilingual resources to provide women with up-to-date information to help navigate COVID-19's systemic impacts.

Peer-led community consultations have informed all of SWAN's responses to COVID-19 and led to the rapid expansion of SWAN's core team. This year saw the creation of six new temporary COVID-19 peer positions and three new

permanent Outreach peer positions.

With six
COVID-related peer
positions, the voices
& self-identified needs
of im/migrant women
continue to be centered
in all of SWAN's
responses to
COVID-19.

Staff work together to keep the voices and self-identified needs of im/migrant women centered in all of SWAN's responses to the pandemic, and in all of our direct services.

# OUR IMPACTS FRONTLINE SERVICE & SUPPORT





535,680 **CONDOMS DISTRIBUTED** 













173 ENGLISH 234 CHINESE



SUPPORT WITH **SAFETY & VIOLENCE MATTERS** 





**INFORMATION PROVISION** 



SUPPORT WITH **IMMIGRATION RELATED MATTERS** 



**HEALTH CLINIC ACCOMPANIMENTS** 



**TRANSLATION** PROVISION & **SUPPORTS** 



HARM REDUCTION **SUPPLIES DELIVERIES** 





The majority of women accessing SWAN's services are Asian. Their experiences of sex work stigma, criminalization, exclusion, racism and systemic vulnerability to violence pre-date the pandemic.

COVID-19 became the catalyst for xenophobia and drastic spikes in anti-Asian racism.

#### ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

By June 2020, police in Vancouver reported a 600% increase in hate crimes targeting Asian people.



In May 2020, SWAN's launched its <u>Messages of Hope Board Campaign</u> to invite community members to take a public stand against racism. Notes of encouragement continue to be conveyed to SWAN's constituents.

The Message Board was launched as SWAN's 2020 Giving Tuesday campaign. Donations to SWAN are welcome but not required for posting a message to the board, which will remain open indefinitely.

Criminalization denies sex workers the same equality, rights and protections as other citizens. In February 2020, parts of Canada's prostitution laws - the <u>Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)</u> - were <u>found to be unconstitutional</u>,

Sex work and human trafficking are often legally viewed as one and the same. Migrant sex workers are subsequently under constant surveillance and harassment by police and bylaws officers, and under threat of arrest, detention and deportation by Canada Border Services Agency.

The majority of SWAN's constituents have no legal protection from violence under current laws. Perpetrators know this and act with relative impunity; they know that this community of sex workers cannot safely report violence to authorities without risking arrest, detention and deportation.

SWAN has long been critical of these egregious criminal justice failures. COVID-19 delayed SWAN's law reform efforts in 2020, but they will resume in 2020 - 2021.

# CRIMMIGRATION & CONFLATION

Canada's current sex work, anti-trafficking & immigration laws criminalize im/migrant sex workers, & view sex work & human trafficking as one & the same.

# HIGHLIGHTS

FROM 2019-2020





As a member group of the Global Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), SWAN attended the **Consultation on Prevention of Human Trafficking and Unsafe Migration** in Bangkok, Thailand. SWAN discussed how current laws, and police & immigration enforcement contribute to unsafe working conditions for im/migrant sex workers in Canada.



Our Executive Director Alison Clancey & SWAN's Legal Supervisor Frances Mahon delivered the **keynote address** in Berlin, Germany, at the 'The Police and Sex Work: Then & Now" conference, attended by sex workers, activists, and academics from around the world.

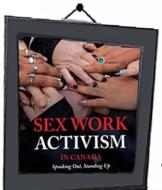


#### OCT 2019

SWAN showed our \*\*Chocolate or Chicken Bones?\*\* Photovoice \*\*Exhibit\* at Simon Fraser University's Women's Center. An engaging Q & A with students followed.



SWAN launched **a new website** and increased community connections through rebranding all its social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WeChat & Instagram.



#### JAN 2020

"Sex Work Activism in Canada" was published, bringing together in one book the narratives, histories, expertise and teachings of sex workers and activists across the country. SWAN's contribution (Chapter 7) gives a glimpse into a week in the life of our organization, as well as our history & evolution.

FEB 2020

SWAN released the **2<sup>nd</sup>** Edition of its "Im/Migrant Sex Workers, Myths & Misconceptions: Realities of the Anti-Trafficked" report.





**8 Aug 2019, Der Taggesspiegel** - SWAN's keynote address is included in the coverage of 'The Police and Sex Work: Then and Now' conference in Berlin: "The Powerful Eye of the Police"

**6 February 2020, Richmond News** - SWAN weighs in on Richmond's municipal sex work policies and massage parlour regulations: "Sex and the city: Richmond 'body rub' policies scrutinized"

**9 March 2020, Richmond News** - SWAN weighs in on the harms created by self-proclaimed trafficking experts: "Former teacher addresses human trafficking at Richmond council"



**Detention Outreach** - In 2019, SWAN staff received security clearance to the new Immigration Holding Centre (IHC) in Surrey, BC as a means to expand our outreach program. The pandemic has regrettably delayed SWAN's first outreach visit to ICH; our services to im/migrant women held there will begin as immediately as the public health situation will allow.















TOP LEFT –July 2020: SWAN attends the Justice for Mona Wang protest.

TOP RIGHT – April 2019: GAATW panel presentation: Global Consultation on the Prevention of Human Trafficking & Unsafe Migration (Thailand), SWAN with counterparts from Brazil, Germany, Lebanon & the Netherlands.

MIDDLE LEFT – June 2019: PACE Society & Aunt Leah's generously donated PPE to SWAN while we waited for funding to secure our own PPE in large quantities.

MIDDLE CENTER - Outreach Staff Kelly & Alice social distancing while preparing for a delivery & providing individual supports to women via Netreach.

MIDDLE RIGHT - Nov 2019: SWAN attends Trans Day of Remembrance March & Memorial.

LOWER LEFT – June 2019: SWAN attends the Red Umbrella March.



# RESOURCES



W FOR SWAN'S CONSTITUENTS

Each year SWAN publishes bilingual resources based on the issues the women who access our services raise, which support informed decision-making on a variety of topics.



#### Health Resource

This resource addresses im/migrant women's experiences of systemic barriers to health care. It includes culturally competent, sex-work specific STI/HIV prevention and treatment information, as well as communication and negotiation strategies for safer sex practices. This resource was made possible through funding provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

#### Anti-Trafficking Laws & Enforcement Resource

Im/migrant sex workers continue to be harmed by anti-trafficking initiatives and 'rescue raids' conducted by law enforcement who – like the laws they enforce – do not differentiate between sex work and trafficking.

This resource outlines Canada's anti-trafficking and prostitution laws and how they affect im/migrant sex workers. It informs women of their legal rights during anti-trafficking raids, and how they can protect themselves from overzealous law enforcement.



#### **SWANzine**

SWAN's quarterly newsletter covers updates related to SWAN, as well as health, social, legal, employment, tenancy, immigration and other information that is important to the communities of women we serve.

SWAN distributes electronic versions of SWANzine through our online outreach program and hardcopies through in-person outreach throughout the Lower Mainland.

While deliveries had to be reduced over March and April due to COVID-19, SWAN still delivered 407 newsletters to women working in massage parlours and independent spaces this year: 173 in English and 234 in Chinese.



Project funding provides opportunities for SWAN to spearhead innovative campaigns that educate, raise awareness, and connect allies in solidarity. It also allows us to develop resources for the women we serve, and for the service providers intersecting with im/migrant women engaged in sex work.

#### SEX WORKER RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS



Launched: 2017 Funder: Public Health Canada

This five-year project aims to reduce HIV/HCV/STI. In its fourth year, SWAN worked with partners Gender & Sexual Health Initiative, Sex Workers United Against Violence, and Health Initiative for Men Society (HUSTLE) to create sex work training for health care providers. While COVID-19 delayed training delivery, SWAN continued to provide outreach services to im/migrant sex workers throughout the Lower Mainland to make HIV/STI prevention, testing and treatment accessible.

#### PEER INCLUSION



Launched: 2019 Funder: City of Vancouver

Through this two-year project, SWAN is restructuring initiatives to increase the involvement & leadership of SWAN's constituents in our operations & governance. As engagement in sex work and employment of any kind is a deportable offense for many of the women SWAN serves, our peer engagement initiatives continue to be innovatively strategized so that women's involvement do not place them at risk for arrest, detention and deportation.

#### HARMS OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING



Launched: 2019 Funder: LUSH Cosmetics

This multi-media project includes a video, guidebook and interactive webpage. It aims to raise awareness and provide much-needed critique of the narratives mainstream anti-trafficking initiatives are based on, the hidden agendas that drive them, and the misguided laws that result. An Action Group will convene monthly to build on the project's message and to strategize community-based actions in response to harmful anti-trafficking campaigns. Due to COVID-19, SWAN delayed the original Spring 2020 launch until October 2020.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



Launched: 2019 Funder: Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)

Through this four-year project, SWAN is building organizational capacity. In its first year, SWAN created a number of new policies, along with a new website and a five-year strategic plan. SWAN's Executive Director and newly hired Development Manager also attended Vantage Point's sevenmenth Capacity Lab program to further develop strategies for efficient infrastructures and sustainable growth for SWAN.

### **ADVOCACY**



#### Health

SWAN's Outreach staff advocated directly with healthcare providers at Vancouver Women's Health Collective and Reach Community Health Centre to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for im/migrant sex workers.

#### Municipal Sex Work Policy

SWAN advocated for evidence-based policy to inform bylaw reviews in regard to licensed indoor massage parlours in the City of Richmond and the City of Toronto.

#### Law Enforcement

SWAN advocated with Richmond RCMP on the criminal justice needs of im/migrant sex workers due to ongoing predatory violence in that municipality. More generally in regard to law enforcement, SWAN no longer meets with police unless warranted by an explicit request from a SWAN constituent and/or the laws that criminalize sex work change.

#### **Federal Policy**

In 2019, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) made changes to its Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers by putting supports in place for migrant workers to safely exit situations of workplace abuse. Unfortunately, these changes exclude migrant sex workers. SWAN advocated for migrant sex workers' inclusion in IRCC's policy changes to no avail.

## A SAFER PROVINCE FOR EVERYONE:

#### RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS - 28 & 29 MAY 2019

The first of its kind in BC, Living in Community hosted the <u>Safer Province for Everyone Conference</u> in Vancouver. The conference brought together sex workers, sex worker organizations, Indigenous organizations, police, government, health authorities, legal organizations, and other stakeholders from throughout BC. Discussions centered around best practices in response to violence against all sex workers, including rural, trans\*/2-spirit, male, im/migrant and Indigenous sex workers. SWAN staff sat on three panels:

#### "Police Reporting Options: Third-Party Reporting of Sexual Assault"

This panel explored different perspectives on existing systems to report sexual violence anonymously. SWAN's Executive Director Alison Clancey advocated that current third-party reporting mechanisms are unsafe for im/migrant sex workers in that they provide sex work-related information to police rather than result in any beneficial outcome for sexual assault survivors.

#### "Connecting with 'Hard to Reach' Populations"

This panel explored sex workers' barriers to services. SWAN's Outreach Coordinator Kelly Go discussed the innovative ways SWAN connects with the uniquely marginalized communities of im/migrant women it serves.

#### "Racialized Sex Workers: Empowerment and Experiences"

Kelly Go and SWAN Member Margaret W. discussed the impacts of racism on sex workers' experiences and interactions with police, service providers and within the sex work community itself.





#### Addressing Crimmigration to Create Peer-Led Services Among Im/Migrant Sex Workers

In the context of criminalization, offering peer services for im/migrant sex workers has been a legal challenge for SWAN since its inception.

Further, most im/migrant sex workers avoid public exposure, and this includes intentional avoidance of sex work organizations. Im/migrant sex workers explain their avoidance by stating that the risks of engaging with sex work organizations often outweigh any personal benefits for them, among other reasons.<sup>1</sup> In this context, much groundwork had to be laid to set up programming that shifted the dial on 'by and for' services. Although well-intentioned, peer services can inadvertently further marginalize im/migrant sex workers by not being fully incusive of intersectional identities.

#### SWAN's Peer Engagement Project

Through a two-year Social Innovation grant from the City of Vancouver, SWAN is developing a specialized peer program that will meet the unique needs of the criminalized and highly stigmatized women it serves. In order to uphold ethical diligence, SWAN continues investing in appropriate research and community consultations to center the voices and' self-identified needs im/migrant sex workers, and their own qualitative measures of what safe, accessible peer-led programs entail.

**PHASE 1** In 2018, SWAN increased legal knowledge through in-depth consultation and recommendations from SWAN's legal supervisor. This was necessary because of the criminalization of im/migrant sex workers under current immigration, sex work and anti-trafficking laws, and the resuting grey legal areas that exist when working with and/or hiring im/migrant sex workers.

**PHASE 2** In 2019, SWAN conducted a global scan of peer service and engagement models used by non-profit organizations that work with marginalized and criminalized populations. Dr. Menaka Raguparan conducted the global scan, and connected with 62 organizations worldwide, including 17 via Skype.

With these two critical phases now complete, SWAN is well-positioned in its path forward to offer peer-led opportunities that are culturally appropriate, inclusive and representative of the im/migrant women it serves.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Raguparan, M. (2019). "So it's not always the sappy story": Women of Colour and Indigenous Women in the Indoor Sectors of the Canadian Sex Industry Speak Out." (Doctoral dissertation, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada). Retrieved from <a href="https://bit.ly/2GwCt8H">https://bit.ly/2GwCt8H</a>

# THAT MAKE SWAN HAPPEN

Since its inception in 2004, SWAN has cultivated a unique network within a sex-working community that experiences exacerbated systemic vulnerabilities because of the conflation of anti-immigrant, anti-sex work and anti-trafficking rhetoric, and the widespread municipal and federal laws and enforcement that result. SWAN's unique mission upholds the diverse voices and agency of im/migrant women who engage in sex work. Regionally, SWAN is the sole provider of culturally-appropriate care, service and advocacy for these distinctly marginalized and often overlooked communities of women.

With our Board's transition from an operational to governance structure this year, we bid bittersweet farewells to Board Members who have been instrumental in steering SWAN's work for many years. SWAN's current growth and evolution would not be possible without their extraordinary expertise, support, service and leadership.

#### OUR BOARD

Dr. Julie Ham President

Noushin Khushrushahi Secretary

Vanessa Sabitova Treasurer

Kimberly MacKenzie *Director* 

#### OUR VOLUNTEERS

Meagan Coady
Ly Nguyen
Jane Shi
Stephanie Vu
Leila Wong

Volunteer outreach workers are the backbone of SWAN's history and remain the anchor of our mission. It is only through their enduring commitment that SWAN's continues to pioneer front-line services, education, research, advocacy and systemic change to support agency, rights and social justice in regard to im/migrant sex work.

SWAN staff handle day-to-day operations while connecting with the women we serve, and strengthening collaboration with our funders, allies, stakeholders and the public. This year, we said goodbye to our Research and Programs

Manager Jessi Taylor as she moved forward with her career at the University of British Columbia, and in her work as a community activist and educator.

With a vast array of knowledge, innovation and dedication, the diverse people who make up our Board, Staff and Volunteers collectively bring our mission to life. Our ongoing successes would be impossible without them. SWAN extends our heartfelt thanks to you all!

#### OUR STAFF

Alison Clancey Executive Director

Kelly Go Outreach Coordinator

> Alice Xiao Outreach Worker

Andi Wiseman Development Manager

"The strength of the team is each individual member.

The strength of each member is the team."

# THE YEAR AHEAD



#### ANTI-TRAFFICKING: HARMING WHILE TRYING TO HELP PROJECT LAUNCH

Scheduled for October 2020.

#### SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

SWAN will continue to promote the safety, inclusion and rights of im/migrant sex workers & to advocate for the repeal of the immigration prohibitions against sex work.

#### BOARD CAPACITY

SWAN will continue to strengthen Board infrastructures following the Board's transition from an operational to governance model.

#### CAPACITY EXPANSION

SWAN will continue to policies, infrastructure and capacity through community & stakeholder engagement.

#### PROVINCIAL BAD DATE REPORTING SYSTEM

In partnership with four other sex-work organizations, SWAN will continue to advocate for provincial funding to make this much-needed service a reality.

strengthen organizational

#### COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

SWAN will increase collaborative partnerships with broader community aroups. migrant rights groups & other stakeholders.

#### PEER ENGAGEMENT

Following the completion of Phases 1&2 of the project, SWAN will implement a formal Peer Program & increase peer leadership & involvement in SWAN's operations & governance.





We remain grateful for our funders. Our work would not be possible without their ongoing support.







# **FINANCIALS**

# SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVES NETWORK (SWAN VAN) SOCIETY Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

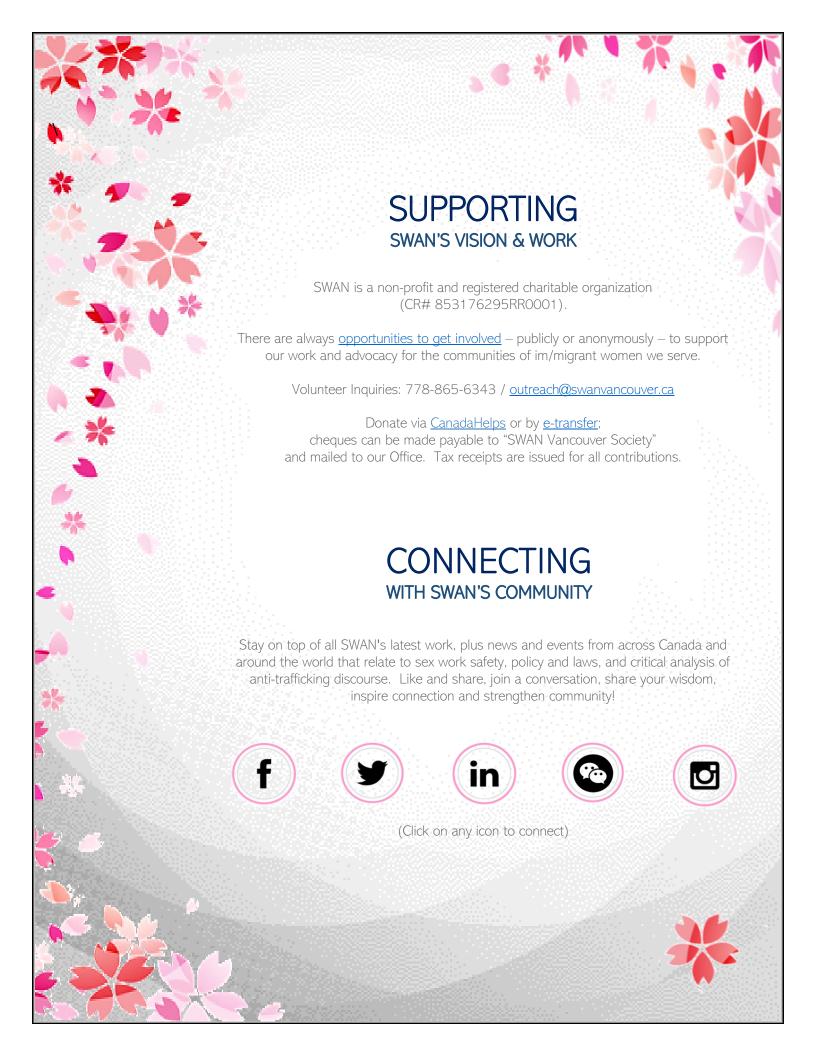
Year Ended March 31, 2020

	_	2020		2019
REVENUES				
City of Vancouver	S	96,040	\$	76,040
Department of Justice Canada		11,662		62,462
Public Health Agency of Canada		56,732		55,375
Donations		7,629		1,505
Women and Gender Equality Canada		60,000		
Lush Cosmetics	_	20,000		-
	_	252,063		195,382
EXPENSES				
Accounting fees		5,293		2,116
Business taxes and licences		42		-
Consulting fees		10,629		-
Donations		100		-
Employee benefits		7,219		3,934
Insurance		1,816		1,741
Interest and bank charges		255		201
Legal fees		6,720		-
Office		2,317		949
Program expenditures		14,719		4,096
Rental		5,176		5,176
Salaries and wages		188,268		124,579
Sub-contracts		16,265		-
Telephone		1,344		1,471
Outreach Travel		2,136		2,291
Utilities	_	739		1,929
	_	263,038		148,483
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$	(10,975)	5	46,899

## SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVES NETWORK (SWAN VAN) SOCIETY Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended March 31, 2020

		General Fund	Restricted Fund		Third Fund		2020	2019
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER	s	66,650 \$		s	-	s	66,650 S	19,751
EXPENSES	_	(10,975)		_			(10,975)	46,899
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$	55,675 \$		s		\$	55,675 S	66.650





# **SWAN Vancouver**

Culturally-Specialized Supports & Advocacy for Im/Migrant Women Engaged in Indoor Sex Work

#101-1101 Seymour Street Vancouver, BC V6B OR1

TEL: 604-719-6343 (ENGLISH)
TEL: 778-865-6343 (CANTONESE & MANDARIN)

#### www.swanvancouver.ca

EMAIL: info@swanvancouver.ca

With gratitude for the wisdom of all First Peoples, we acknowledge that we live & work on the stolen lands of the Musqueam, Squamish & Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

