

Cheryl Smith was a long-time client of SARA for Women! In spite of her challenges, Cheryl was a well-respected community member who spent many of her days interacting and giving back by volunteering her time to help others. She was passionate about marginalized and vulnerable individuals and would advocate strongly for what she believed in.

Cheryl was born July 4, 1961 and raised in Victoria, BC. Although it was speculated that Cheryl had been born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome she was never formally diagnosed. Cheryl struggled with reading and writing and often fell through the cracks in the social system. She was rightfully impatient with the injustices of society.

Cheryl had a restless soul, and found it hard to stay in one place for long. She was well known from the downtown east side of Vancouver to the streets of Abbotsford. Her days would start at 5 or 6 in the morning where she could often be seen pushing her shopping cart full of collected treasures and bags of bottles for recycling, not stopping until 8 at night. Cheryl was self-sufficient and always wanted to provide for herself. She was also very kind and would go out of her way to find things when someone was in need. She attacked life passionately and people always knew where they stood with her. Cheryl was known for her big, robust voice and you would always know she was coming before she was seen!

Cheryl had a special childlike quality about her that endeared her to many and children gravitated to her. She was known for her huge bear hugs that could lift you off the ground which were often followed by a wet kiss on the cheek! Cheryl had a smile that would light up a room with a great sense of humour and a unique way of making people laugh when they were sad. Cheryl was a great worker, as evidenced by her commitment to helping when the Christine Lamb Residence was being built. She was always willing to help where needed and there was no task she wouldn't tackle!

Cheryl passed away suddenly on November 3, 2019. She had been a force to be reckoned with and would leave a huge hole in the community. She was loyal, kind, and outspoken. On her way to visit, she would often pick fresh flowers and share them with the women and staff. Every Christmas, Cheryl would dress up in a Santa suit and participate in the festivities, making the holidays a special time for the women in our community. She is greatly missed. It is with great pride that our new building is bearing the name of such a strong community advocate.