

By PEGGY PAWELKO

Staff writer

Nelson's Women's Centre, designed to educate women in their rights as individuals, has received a \$7,600 secretary of state grant from Ottawa's citizenship department.

The money has been used to set up the centre, (whose members have been meeting in private homes since last July) at 490 Baker St.

Vita Storey has been hired as co-ordinator of the centre, under the grant. She has worked voluntarily with the centre since its inception.

The 25-year-old mother who takes the women's liberation movement seriously, plans to set up the centre as a meeting area where women can share views. Women's liberation literature is being collected and will be available at the centre. Advice from divorce rights to job equality can be obtained. One woman, handling her own divorce has already sought help and another needed counselling on family court procedures.

Mrs. Storey is well qualified for the job. She worked for the Kootenay Learning Project last year, was a member of the Vancouver women's caucus, and has kept up with women's lib developments.

Helping her, as co-worker of the centre is 28-year-old Gail Haws.

Mrs. Haws, a mother of three children, ages 8, 11 and 12, said she fitted the role of a stereotype receptionist before becoming aware of the women's lib movement.

Having been through it, she said she gets frustrated whenever she thinks about how society restricts the roles of women.

The two women plan to make Nelson females, and males, too, more aware of their potentials.

Although women's lib is important in a city like Vancouver, Mrs. Haws said it more necessary in small cities like Nelson, where the career opportunities for women are limited.

The Women's Centre feels women have to be re-educated about their roles in society and plans to start with a survey of the high schools, asking girls how they feel about the changing status of women.

They hope the survey will

by the time they reach junior high school, their academic interest has dropped below the boys'.

The women said this is because teen girls are brought up with the idea they will become wives and mothers. By the time they reach high school most of them have accepted it.

"Girls can't be brain-washed with the idea that because they are female they are going to have an apron tied around their waist for the rest of their days," exclaimed Mrs. Haws.

For this reason, Mrs. Storey and Mrs. Haws are striving to change the "psychological thing" that makes women fit the wife-mother-teacher-nurse-secretary roles. They have started with their daughters.

"My daughters have just started to realize the roles they've been saddled with. I tell them not to let it stop them from doing whatever they want," said Mrs. Haws.

"I really want it to be different for my daughter," said Mrs. Storey of her four-year-old. "It really helps to have a supportive

mother at home."

Publicly, the Women's Centre in co-operation with the Status of Women Council in Castlegar, is setting up an 8 week lecture series at Selkirk College on the



GAIL HAWS

roles of women in poverty, law and other areas.

Mrs. Haws claimed the Women's liberation movement got a bad name from press coverage a few years ago.

"People are finding out it isn't just the burn the bra thing they thought it was."

The centre's education won't stop with women, either. Men, too, must be willing to look at their roles, their concepts of masculinity and their positions of power as the breadwinner, Mrs. Storey said.

In fact, for the centre, liberation is an all-encompassing thing.

"Being liberated is being who you really are," said Mrs. Storey, "We first must feel society as a whole is liberated before every man, woman and child will be free to be who they really are."



VITA STOREY