



TOP
30
RUNNER-UP

The Continual Fight for Sex Trade Worker Rights

By Paula Carlson

It was a hot June day, and Louise Boilevin had just finished participating in Vancouver's annual Red Umbrella March, which celebrates the history of the city's sex workers.

She found herself at CRAB Park, still carrying the sign she had toted throughout the march, which takes place as an act of defiance against what participants deem Canada's unfair and unconstitutional prostitution laws.

"Standing Together for Sex Work Solidarity," read Louise's sign.

She wanted to get a picture, so she decided to ask a passer-by for help.

"I just picked this random girl, 'Hey can you help me take this picture?'"

Louise wanted to commemorate the march because she really enjoyed the theme of the 2018 event.

"What I liked about [last] year's was that it was focusing on the history of the red light district, history of the turn of the last century, and talking about how many of the women went to jail and they had to pay fines, and how stuff operated in the past."

This year (2019), the Red Umbrella March—which is organized by the Triple-X Workers' Solidarity Association of B.C.—will be in its seventh year.

Sex trade worker rights are "something I've believed in passionately for a long, long, long, long time," Louise says. "It's something I'm just committed to fighting until stuff gets more legalized and more beneficial for the girls, and for myself too."

Louise notes the march is not just for sex trade workers, but for supporters such as friends, family and members of the community.

This photo represents the *Hope in Shadows* calendar theme of spirit and resilience because "it shows our fight, basically our

Each month, *Megaphone* features an image from the Top 30 finalists in our annual *Hope in Shadows* photo contest. The winning 13 photos are published in our 2019 *Hope in Shadows* calendar, on sale now in Vancouver and Victoria.

continual fight, for sex trade worker rights, and improvement with the laws. It shows resilience because we're standing out in public against the odds, withstanding the glares and jeers and stuff, so it kind of shows that we're standing together, out there, up front."

Louise says combatting negative perceptions is what the march—and she—is all about.

"Challenging all of the stereotypes, all the stigma, just squashing it. That's great. Because sex trade workers are also your neighbours and part of everyday society." ◀

About the photographer:

A born-and-raised Vancouverite, Louise Boilevin has been a part of the *Megaphone* community since November 2016.

Politically active and a champion for human and animal rights, Louise is an active advocate for social housing, sex worker rights and the movement to stop animal cruelty. A former sex trade worker, she is involved in several organizations



in the Downtown Eastside and is on the board of directors at SWUAV—Sex Workers United Against Violence.

Louise sells *Megaphone* magazine and *Hope in Shadows* calendars at Granville and Broadway in Vancouver.

HOPE IN SHADOWS 2019