



WESTCOAST NEWS

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Executive Director's report

We are excited to be hosting our first training opportunity for community professionals. In April, **Diane Benoit**, a recognized expert on child-parent attachment relationships, will lead a 3 -day workshop in Vancouver. She will present current research and practical interventions to use with families. Please see attached, or our website, for registration information.

www.westcoastfamily.org

Recent Re-accreditation results from the Council on Accreditation confirm our high performance standards and quality services. This is Westcoast's third time through the accreditation process. I'd like to thank all of the clients, colleagues, staff and volunteers who provided their feedback and assisted in the accreditation process. Over 40 community partners returned feedback forms to COA, a number almost unheard of for an agency of our size, where 10 – 15 is the norm.

We are grateful to VANOC and Kids Up Front for the Olympics tickets donated for the low-income families we work with. Clients have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend events and have been very enthusiastic about participating. During the Olympics we will maintain services as much as possible, while also doing our part to reduce vehicle travel during this time.

We have been participating in community meetings that provide a venue for dialogue about maintaining best practice and service for clients in a time of economic recovery. It is a time for flexibility, creativity and collaboration to ensure uninterrupted service to clients.

Ann Kutcher



Freeza and Olga with medals. All programs have posted information about events, transportation changes, and other Olympic news.



Westcoast Family Resources Society

Head Office and Vancouver (NE): #101—2780 E. Broadway, Vancouver V5M 1Y8 Ph: (604) 254-5457
Vancouver (NW) : #201—460 Nanaimo St, Vancouver V5L 4W3 Ph: (604) 255-9568
North Shore : #304—1200 Lynn Valley Rd, North Vancouver V7J 2A2 Ph: (604) 985-2202
Ridge Meadows: 22323—119 Ave, Maple Ridge V2X 2Z2 Ph: (604) 466-7328
Tri Cities East Neighbourhood Centre: 2062 Manning Ave, Port Coquitlam V3B 1L6 Ph: (604) 944-2500

Our Programs: what's new

Vietnamese inter-agency gathering

In January Westcoast hosted a meeting of community workers serving the Vietnamese community. Over 50 people met to talk about the history of Vietnamese settlement in the Lower Mainland and about issues of importance to the community. Community members spoke about their experiences of rescue at sea, of life in refugee camps and of adjusting to life in Canada.

Workers shared ideas and resources for families. Vietnamese leaders provided information about scholarships, mentoring plans and other supports. A delicious lunch full of the flavours of Vietnam provided an opportunity for more networking and information sharing. Thanks to **Huong, Joanna, Kate** and others at Westcoast for their organizational work. We hope to be able to offer more of these networking opportunities in future.



North Shore Groups

With the addition of a Farsi-speaking Family Counsellor the program has been able to offer a range of new groups for local families. Current or future Farsi-language groups focus on:

- Understanding the Ages and Stages of children's development
- Parenting Teens
- Supporting Extended family members as caregivers

Women in the community are planning a self-help/mutual aid group to explore the topic of Women and Anger. Our staff will provide support. The group will allow participants to talk about the emotional issues they find challenging. People can look at beliefs they may hold about having to be contained and expressing emotions in a reserved manner. They can work on more openness in expressing emotions and in communication.

Two Clinical Counselling students, **Danielle** and **Jena**, will offer a Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) class based on Adlerian theory.

For more information call our North Shore office (604) 985-2202

Quality Improvement

As an accredited agency we use a number of measures to examine our work and its effectiveness. We gather client, staff, and community partner feedback. An internal committee looks at files and other records. We do safety checks of our building sites and vehicles.

Client surveys are in English, Chinese written language, Spanish, Farsi, Punjabi and Vietnamese. Below is some of the client feedback recently gathered:

- My worker's help goes above and beyond the scope of this questionnaire and I believe that her support has strengthened my ability.
- Though [this service] all came about from a bad situation, we are happy we had the opportunity to meet with our worker and develop great skills to cope with stressful situation accordingly.
- ...We've run out of time. There is a great deal of uncertainty whether this new found awareness will lead to some resolutions coming from our existing set of skills.
- My worker helped me and my child every step of the way to get adequate and stable housing.

All of the data we gather is analyzed and our committee makes recommendations about changes to improve services.

Westcoast News wants to hear from you!

As a reader of this newsletter your thoughts are important to us. What do you want to know about Westcoast? What should we be writing about in the newsletter? Please send us your thoughts

Please send feedback, photos and ideas to: Carol Anderson Ph: (604) 254-5457 carol.anderson@westcoastfamily.org



The **HIVE Neighbourhood Centre** at Eric Langton Elementary School in Maple Ridge is an exciting new venture that brings over 20 community partners together to offer a variety of locally based services. Bourne out of months of meetings, community forums, and overwhelming collaborative spirit, the HIVE officially opened its door in December 2009. The HIVE bases its values and guiding principles on:



Equitable opportunities and outcomes for all, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable
Client/Family Centered services which respect the innate strengths of individuals and acknowledge their capacity to contribute to their own well being and to the quality of neighbourhood and community life
Respect for the learning environment, practicing social responsibility and viewing positive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding as integral to the success of this Hub
Honouring Diversity through celebration, promotion, inclusion and accessibility
Effective Practices that involve consultation with community and that are sustainable
Community Development and Capacity Building to create a vital space that provides opportunities for individuals and the community to build their capacity
Commitment to Collaboration through mutual support and integrated services, agencies and individuals trust and value the commitment and success of all partners
Flexibility and Responsiveness so that services are responsive and provide for flexible usage to create greater opportunities for all to participate and contribute

The HIVE is now buzzing with activity. Our staff are there Tuesday mornings running Mother Goose song and story programs and Tuesday afternoons leading the Nobody's Perfect parenting program with co-facilitators from Fraser Health. Westcoast is proud to be part of this exciting project.

Submitted by Jan Waldbillig



Vancouver evening groups: We have started serving family-style dinners before evening groups. Families eat together in a relaxed atmosphere and have time to connect with one another. Participants have said that being able to have dinner provided for them eliminates the rush and provides a mid-week reprieve.

Vancouver daytime groups at Hastings Community Centre:

- Are my expectations reasonable? Mar 17
- Understanding your child's temperament Mar 24
- Sibling rivalry Apr 14
- Communication skills Apr 21

To register, or for more information please call **Anna** or **Diane** at (604) 254-5457, ext 238

Mediation: creating options in a collaborative environment

Mediation is often used in our short-term intensive work at Westcoast. This can provide a structure for people who want to make life changes because of strife in areas such as marital conflict, or parents with differing views of child rearing.

At the first meeting people look for common ground. They are guided to explore interests and needs they share. This then becomes the base on which to set goals for the future and decide about what steps should be taken to get there.

Jamil, a Vancouver Family Counsellor, says that, with mediation, people can come to a place where they want to make changes because they realize it's in their best interest. This collaborative perspective can allow people to move away from rigid positions and allow them to see things from a different angle.





Christmas 2009 support

Westcoast received a range of donations for the low income children and families we work with:

- **Travel Underwriters**, one of Canada’s leading travel insurance providers, has a big-hearted tradition – they make Christmas hampers for families served by our Vancouver program. They always look forward to this activity, says **Iain MacAuley**, HR Director. Over 100 employees get involved. “This is the 9th year we’ve done this. Half of our employees were born outside of Canada and together we speak over 25 languages”. Thanks so much to all of the staff at Travel Underwriters. Your work on behalf of others is priceless!
- **Susan Smith** and her friends and co-workers put together a tremendous hamper of food, toys and equipment for a family. “It became a snowball”, Susan said, “people were very generous. It made my Christmas.” It certainly gave a lot of joy to the family.
- **Lisa** and her friends have been donating to Westcoast for many years. They are motivated by the desire to give back to others. They put together an array of food, toys and personal items that delighted recipients at Christmas.
- Individuals and service clubs made donations
- **Empty Stocking Fund** passed on the generous donations from *Vancouver Province* readers
- Food stores donated gift cards for clients
- Retail stores gave donations or discounts

Please see our website for a list of donors



Mari Blardony and Iain MacAuley of TU, with Julie Renton



Thanks to **Pat Peron** and his team from Canada Safeway for giftcards for clients.



Lisa and friends provided gifts and food.

Donate to Westcoast Family Resources Society

Canada Revenue Agency registered charity # 13145 4555RR0001

Donations fund education groups for parents, equipment, and new endeavours at Westcoast.

I enclose my donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Return to: Westcoast Family Resources Society #101—2780 E. Broadway Vancouver BC V5M 1Y8 A tax receipt will be sent to you.

You can also donate to Westcoast on-line. It’s easy: Go to our website **www.westcoastfamily.org**

Click on “Make a Donation”. Then on the “Donate Now” button. This secure website administers donations for us. You can donate in someone’s honour, or set up monthly donations. A tax receipt will be sent to you.