

vancouver foundation

stories
of modern
philanthropy

2017

PM 40065475

THE *Gifts* OF *Inclusion*

RECLAIMING HISTORY

The search for lost artifacts

THE ART OF BELONGING

A life told in verse and image

OUT IN SCHOOLS

Educating the system

MORE THAN A MEAL

From hunger to dignity

The First Word ...

FURTHERING BELONGING AND INCLUSION

AS WE CONSIDER OUR THEME of belonging and inclusion, we are reminded of a moment from April 2017. Vancouver Foundation invited federal Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Ahmed Hussen to speak with our Fresh Voices Initiative advisory team, a group of 20 young people who came to Canada as immigrants or refugees. The minister asked the group what he could do to help them eventually become Canadian and they were so eager to participate. We often think of new Canadians in terms of what we give them, but we were struck that day by what they could give us. They truly want to belong and contribute to this country.

Belonging and inclusion are core to our vision at Vancouver Foundation. Whether you're a new Canadian, Indigenous, young or old, we want to ensure we reflect the vibrant society that we are part of. We're not alone. We work with dozens of organizations to advance social inclusion. Through our Neighbourhood Small Grants program we work with Neighbourhood Houses across the Lower Mainland. Through our grants for reconciliation projects we have helped empower educators to add Indigenous perspectives and history to their curricula. Whether we are working to advance the interests of children in foster care, increase accessibility for those with disabilities, or empower immigrant and refugee youth, we constantly seek opportunities to further belonging and inclusion.

Our own studies show how important a sense of belonging is to general health and well-being, and that goes beyond the level of the individual. We believe that empowerment through inclusion is an effective way to tackle serious social problems and build societal cohesion.

The work of Fresh Voices is a great example. Today, the group is spearheading an effort to give Permanent Residents – new Canadians who pay municipal taxes, send their children to local schools, and sit on parent advisory councils – that most basic civic right: the right to vote. Through a public education campaign and meetings with public officials at all levels of government, the group seeks to give a voice to new Canadians. Vancouver Foundation can open doors to decision-makers, we can help amplify voices and function as an ally to groups that often find themselves marginalized or excluded.

Inclusion is fundamentally ingrained in our work, and we are proud to see the idea embraced by many of the organizations we work with. That includes our civic partner, the City of Vancouver, which launched the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force in order to further inclusion. Those youth at the roundtable back in the spring proved that when we reach out to include diverse voices and perspectives, we're advancing not only the interests of people who are traditionally excluded. We're also advancing our own. ∞

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Projects Vancouver Foundation and our donors recently supported



WePress

Plastered on transit shelters across East Vancouver, the block-printed poster of *Raise the Rates*, a campaign that seeks to increase welfare rates, stands testament to the power of a simple placard. Bold, arresting and clear in its message, it demonstrates the mission of WePress Vancouver, a collective-run print shop based in Chinatown. “We wanted to make a letter press, which is usually difficult to access, accessible to all sorts of people,” says Kathy Shimizu, a graphic designer and member of the collective. Established in 2016 as a studio that would connect artists, community organizers, low-income residents of the Downtown Eastside and others interested in printmaking, the studio houses a unique mix of printers – an old Reynolds letterpress inherited from the former Woodward’s Department Store, a set of 8,000 Chinese characters from the Ho Sun Hing Print Shop and a 3D printer. WePress offers courses and classes to help fund its activities, but its core mission is to fight for social justice by empowering its community with print-making tools – an endeavour made possible in part by two Vancouver Foundation grants (\$10,000 and \$75,000). Says Shimizu: “We really believe in the power of art advocacy.”

Friendships through photography

There is a particular sense of dislocation that comes with immigrating to Canada. “Sometimes when we’re new here, we’re isolated,” says Mary Blanca Villa y Battenberg, who came from Mexico, where she owned an art gallery. Last year, Battenberg and her friend Elena Lis, formerly a photography studio owner in her native Ukraine, wanted to tackle that sense of isolation. With a \$500 Neighbourhood Small Grant from Vancouver Foundation, they organized a photography seminar for new Canadians. The response was enthusiastic – 20 Burnaby residents from places like Iran, China, Iraq, Colombia and Bangladesh turned out to learn about lighting techniques and camera angles. Then they went out and captured images of their community, their homes, and vistas from Burnaby Mountain. “It was interesting how they see this city that is new to them,” says Battenberg. Those photo sessions culminated in an



exhibit called *Burnaby through the eyes of immigrants and refugees* that toured the city’s public libraries early in 2017. There was another important aspect to the project – the sessions helped the participants build friendships. “It was good for us to have a point of meeting together. This project united all of us,” says Lis. “It helps to share my vision, my experience. I think it helps to communicate with people.”



The Imagination Network

In 2013, a small group of artists and caregivers in the Sunshine Coast town of Gibsons devised a project that would tackle a thorny question facing communities across Canada: what role do we want people with the experience of dementia to play? For Bruce Devereux, Recreation and Volunteer Manager at Gibsons care home Christensen Village, and Chad Hershler, Artistic and Executive Director of Deer Crossing the Art Farm, the answer was obvious. "We wanted the rest of the community to be aware that these were dynamic and vibrant people," says Hershler. Inspired by a U.S. project, Devereux sat down with a number of Christensen Village residents living with dementia, handed each one a series of photos, for example a wind tunnel, and asked them to brainstorm a story. A few months later, he showed them to Hershler. "I read five and I was sold," he says. "The stories were funny, interesting, profound, visual – all the things that arts groups are trying to find." They held sessions between artists and the seniors living with dementia, aiming to turn some of these stories into art: paintings, songs, even theatre. Those works, when presented during the Sunshine Coast Arts Crawl in October 2015, were a big hit. Now the pair has partnered with Colleen Reed, a faculty member at Douglas College, to see whether this form of arts-based engagement could have larger implications on the experiences of people with dementia. With the help of a \$149,736 grant from Vancouver Foundation, The Imagination Network was launched in 2017. ∞

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Photo: Chad Hershler

LOST

60,000 VOTES

MEMBERS OF VANCOUVER FOUNDATION'S YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE CAMPAIGN TO EXTEND VOTING RIGHTS TO PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Here's a conundrum: Permanent Residents pay city taxes and contribute to their communities in all kinds of ways, yet when it comes to municipal elections, they don't get a vote. It was an injustice that galvanized the members of the Fresh Voices Initiative, Vancouver Foundation's youth advisory committee. All 18 members, aged 15 to 24, had come to Canada either as immigrants or refugees, and many of them had witnessed first-hand the challenges of exclusion. "The biggest barrier was trying to engage immigrant families to be more involved with schools, and school districts," says Vi Nguyen, Director, Youth Engagement at Vancouver Foundation. "When Permanent Residents can't vote for trustees, when they don't have a say, there's a built-in lack of belonging and inclusion." To that end, the Fresh Voices Initiative has spearheaded the campaign **Lost Votes YVR**, that seeks to give these people the right to vote in the City of Vancouver. Members of the group have launched a public education campaign and met with more than a dozen officials both at city hall and in Victoria with the hope of giving a voice to Permanent Residents. ∞

Audrey Mason

A photograph of a woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, looking up at the head of a dark horse. The horse's head is in the foreground on the left, and the woman is on the right. The background is a stable with wooden stalls.

For the Love of HORSES

Audrey Mason's empathy for those who can benefit from equine-assisted therapy lives on in an estate gift to Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities

By GUY MacPHERSON

AUDREY MASON ALWAYS INTENDED for her estate to make a difference. During her lifetime, Mason was generous to a number of charities, according to her friend and executor Lin Perceval. A lifelong lover of horses, Mason sponsored a retired Vancouver Police Department horse named Banner at Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities (PRDA) in Langley.

Since 1973, PRDA has been providing therapeutic horseback riding for people with physical, cognitive and emotional conditions ranging from autism, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and Down syndrome to eating disorders, trauma, and bereavement. “Anybody, really, going through life’s challenges,” says Executive Director and coach Michelle Ingall. She says that one of the best ways that people can help the PRDA is through horse sponsorship, which covers expenses of the animal’s care.

Currently PRDA houses 18 therapy horses for about 175 students. The ancient Greeks knew the restorative powers of riding but it wasn’t until 1960 when equine-assisted therapy came to North America. Students improve their flexibility, balance and muscle strength – a boon to those with physical challenges – as well as see an increase in confidence, patience and self-esteem.

When Banner “went off to the great pasture in the sky,” as Perceval puts it, Mason continued her sponsorship with Ladybug, a tiny Welsh mare, one of the most popular ponies in the stables.

But Mason found an even better way of helping. Through a fund she created at Vancouver Foundation, she left a legacy gift of \$1.4 million along with instructions for it to support PRDA, which will receive approximately \$50,000 per year in perpetuity.

“When Lin Perceval told us the amount, I just about cried,” says Ingall. “It’s astounding. It was kind of like us winning the lottery, really. It was incredible.”

Mason, who passed away on April 1, 2016, at the age of 93, had moved to Canada from her native England in 1963. She eventually settled in Vancouver and worked as a medical research lab technologist at UBC. She lived close to the Southlands Riding Club, and it was here that she learned about PRDA, which was founded at the riding club in 1973 and moved its headquarters to Langley in 1998.

“Her house was lovely because you could sit in her living room and in the summer with the windows open, you would hear the horses walking by,” says Perceval. “You’d hear the hooves on the road. It was just a very delightful place to live. Perfect for her because she had her horse and her garden and her cat.”



The Vancouver Foundation annual grant from Audrey Mason’s fund will provide plenty of benefit to the society and, in turn, to its students. “It certainly doesn’t mean we can rest on our laurels,” Ingall says, “but it creates long-term sustainability for us because the only thing we can count on every year is lesson fees.”

Aside from those fees and the gaming funds the organization applies for each year, PRDA has had no reliable source of funding. Until now.

“When I first came into this role, I didn’t realize how much of our budget we have to fundraise,” says Ingall, who has been executive director for the past five years. “So to have this legacy left to us makes us way more sustainable.”

Already the largest therapeutic riding centre in British Columbia, PRDA now has ample opportunity to grow thanks to Mason’s generosity. Ingall says with a laugh: “It helps me sleep a little bit better!” ☺

A Legacy Fund at Vancouver Foundation is an excellent way to support your favourite charities and help future generations at the same time. We can show you how a Legacy Fund offers flexibility and peace of mind. For more information call Kristin in Donor Services at 604.629.5186 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/legacy.



Out in Schools started as a program to help students talk about bullying and stereotypes. Now it's educating the system

By LAWRENCE KAROL

HOW WOULD YOUR STORY CHANGE THE WORLD?

It's an intriguing question, particularly when posed to young people who are still grappling with a developing sense of self. Every presentation by Out in Schools (OiS) begins with this rhetorical query as a starting point for talking with students about the issues of homophobia, transphobia, and bullying.

"It's our entry point for asking the young people where they normally see or hear stories," says Brandon Yan, 31, Education Director of Out On Screen. "From there we always go on to the topic of lack of diversity and representation. Even today, in mainstream media, we're still seeing a dearth of content focused on queer and trans lives."

Yan, who was raised in Langley, says that he wasn't bullied much in high school but he was also very much

in the closet – an experience he hopes to help today's youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer and other gender expressions (LGBT2Q+) avoid. "I want to create change because I think of the time I spent worrying about what would happen if I came out," he says, "and all the time I wasn't fully, completely myself."

Launched in 2004, OiS started as an outreach effort of Out On Screen (OOS) – a non-profit organization that also presents the Vancouver Queer Film Festival – whose mission is to illuminate, celebrate, and advance queer lives through film, education, and dialogue. To overcome any initial hesitation on the part of school districts, Yan and his colleagues worked closely with several supportive educators to bring the

program into their schools. “In the beginning, we were showing queer films and talking about bullying and stereotypes, but I think we’ve gone beyond that now,” says Yan. “We’re addressing gender and sexual diversity in such deep and meaningful ways that really connect with all youth.” That’s no small feat considering OiS has just two full-time staff and 13 part-time facilitators.

In addition to screening three to five short films, the group’s presentations include discussion questions and dialogue. “Art has the ability to make people feel things and that’s really core to what we do,” says Yan. “It’s eliciting an emotional response from people watching these kinds of experiences on film.” In the short film *Regalia: Pride in Two Spirits*, a First Nations youth talks about his pride in both his queer identity and his culture. During one showing, Yan noticed a student sitting quietly in the back of the room who suddenly came to life. “After the film ended, they raised their hand and just wanted to say, ‘I am Nuu-chah-nulth, too!’ It was so amazing to see a young person feel validated to see their people on screen. That’s what we try to do because everyone deserves to see themselves represented no matter who they are.”

But while their program continued to gain traction, Yan and his team wanted to go further – to create systemic change. In 2016, they applied for and received a three-year, \$109,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation. This funding allowed them to expand in scope and vision.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the program delivered almost 190 presentations, up from 137 the previous year. “Our past programming only spoke to the students, which puts the onus of change on them, whereas the adults and decision-makers also have a huge part to play, especially in addressing the root causes of LGBT2Q+ discrimination,” says Yan. “So we took it upon ourselves to ask for some help to deal with the issue of looking at education holistically.” In addition to their student presentations, OiS began conducting dozens of professional development sessions with educators, staff, administrators, parents and politicians across the province.

The success of their efforts is apparent by the standard of an age-old measurement – an increase in demand. “Teachers and educators are the ones who make our work possible,” says Yan. “If they didn’t like what we’re doing we’d definitely see a drop-off in the work, but we’re seeing nothing but a huge increase.” So far, OiS has visited 46 of the 60 school districts in British Columbia, including some in more remote areas such as Smithers and Nakusp, and the team’s goal is to reach every district in the next

year. With the help of the Vancouver Foundation grant, OiS has also been able to help bring about some significant changes at the provincial level.

In April 2016, the group met with members of the Legislative Assembly in Victoria and brought along Tru Wilson, a young transgender activist who articulated the need for inclusive schools and education. A few months later, the B.C. government amended the Human Rights Code with the addition of “gender identity or expression” as grounds for discrimination. In September 2016, the Ministry of Education ordered all districts and independent schools to have specific references to sexual orientation and gender identity in their codes of conduct. “We cannot take credit for these changes, but we were able to advocate for them directly after receiving the grant,” says Yan.

But their work is far from done. While OiS started out presenting primarily in high schools, the team has received a rise in requests over the past few years to speak at elementary schools. This poses a number of new challenges for the organization – not only marshalling the resources to meet the increase in bookings, but also determining how presenters should modify their approach to talk about sexuality and gender in a way that younger people can understand.

In addition, the team is planning educational outreach to school districts to help them create and craft policies that support and protect LGBT2Q+ youth. They also hope to continue to provide professional development – for example, reaching out to teachers pursuing their degrees at schools such as Simon Fraser University and University of British Columbia. “We want to give them the necessary information before they begin their teaching careers,” says Yan.

Looking back on his own high school days, Yan marvels at the changes that have taken place. “When I went to school in Langley, never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that it would become one of the more progressive districts in the province.” He notes, for example, that Langley has a district-wide Gay-Straight Alliance club. “So these young LGBT2Q+ youth are being shown that they belong. That wasn’t the perception I had when I was going to school.” ☺

For more information about the Out in Schools project visit outinschools.com. To support important projects like this, call Calvin in Donor Services at 604.629.5357 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give.

Fresh Thinking



Brenda Bolton
(left), coordinator
of the Food Share
Network and
Janine Boice
(right), Mustard
Seed's Director
of Development

The Victoria founders of the Food Rescue Project have fed thousands and saved truckloads of produce and milk from compost. Now they have a bigger vision

By SHANNON HAMELIN | PHOTO NIK WEST

EVERY MONTH, Greater Victoria grocery stores remove thousands of kilograms of fruit, vegetables and dairy products from their shelves. It hasn't yet passed "best before" dates, but due to the store's stock rotation requirements and consumer behaviour, this quality edible food must be discarded.

Now, instead of going into the waste stream, the food is brought to the Mustard Seed Street Church's Food Security Distribution Centre in Esquimalt, where three employees and up to 20 volunteers glean, clean and package it, six days a week. It's then distributed to more than 25 agencies involved in providing emergency food, as well as to underserved populations such as vulnerable seniors, students and Indigenous communities throughout the Capital Regional District. The Food Rescue's healthy produce and dairy products are manna from grocery store heaven compared to the typical packaged, processed items that fill food hampers.

The Food Rescue Project was founded in mid-2015 when the church joined with the Food Share Network – composed of more than 40 non-profit agencies, grocer Thrifty Foods, Rotary Clubs of Greater Victoria, the Victoria Foundation and other groups – to raise funds for long-term solutions to hunger and poverty. The church was already distributing food hampers to families in need, but with the goal of increasing those efforts, the group secured a 13,500-sq.-ft. facility where it could accept and organize donations of perishable foods. The church now serves as operational lead of the Food Rescue Project. "The key to this has been having a hub," says Janine Boice, the Mustard Seed's Director of Development. "With the new warehouse, we can increase capacity."

When the new space opened in March 2017, it was thought 30 per cent of the perishable items would be thrown out. Amazingly, only about five per cent is composted. Contrary to public perception, it's not mushy bananas or stale yogurt that is taken off store shelves. "The boxes of food going out look like you've just shopped," says Boice. "The other day we got 100 pounds of cherries. We even got a pallet of organic grapes."

By the summer of 2017, the Mustard Seed's 5,000 food bank users as well as thousands more in the community were receiving the produce and dairy items each month, either by collecting hampers or attending meal programs. But as the Victoria Foundation's 2014 Vital Signs report found, approximately 50,000 people in the Capital Region experience some degree of food insecurity. Members of the Food Rescue Project were determined to do more.

Now they want to expand the number of people the project reaches, but also offer more than emergency food. With a \$50,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation, the Food Rescue Project is building a heavy-duty kitchen at the Food Security Distribution Centre and opening a unique grocery store at the Mustard Seed's headquarters in downtown Victoria. "If people are properly nourished, they can take on life's challenges in a new way," Boice says. "It's part of the Mustard Seed's continuum of care."

At the 700-sq.-ft. kitchen, community members will have the opportunity to learn how to prepare products like pickles and jams. The space will also be offered for rent to local companies and non-profit agencies on a sliding scale. The Mustard Seed Street Church will develop retail food products that can be sold at farmers' markets and grocery stores to offset some of the costs of operating the Food Security Distribution Centre. These products will be developed through collaboration with The Island Chefs Collaborative, which has a mandate to improve food security, preserve farmland and develop local food systems. "This is an amazing opportunity to increase regional food security," says Brenda Bolton, coordinator of the Food Share Network. "The Mustard Seed will be able to produce value-added products using locally sourced, seasonal food." As well, at the kitchen and warehouse, people will receive training in areas such as Food Safe certification or driving a forklift.

Dignity Market, opening at the end of 2017, will allow food bank users to choose the goods they want, instead of being given products they may not use. People will be partnered with a shopping buddy who will help them learn more about food. "The Vancouver Foundation grant is enabling us to engage, for transformation, with the people coming for food services," says Mustard Seed Executive Director Bruce Curtiss. "We're not just meeting their food needs but we're addressing their future life, helping people move out of dependency to a place of non-dependency."

The kitchen and the market, Boice explains, have new dimensions that expand the mission of the Food Rescue Project. "It's learning to cook, food literacy, job training – but we're also restoring dignity. People know they matter." ∞

To learn more about the Food Rescue project visit mustardseed.ca/food-rescue. To support innovative community projects like this, call Calvin in Donor Services at 604.629.5357 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give.

Small Steps,



Big Goal

Matt Hill and Stephanie Tait reflect on their Run for One Planet, and what it means today

By JACOB PARRY

TEN YEARS AGO, Matt Hill and Stephanie Tait laced up their sneakers and left Vancouver to run a marathon. The next day they ran another, and then another – and about a year later they had completed 369. Over the Rockies, through the Maritimes, across Louisiana’s bayous and stretches of the Arizona desert, they ran a total of more than 17,700 kilometers. A few times a week, they stopped at elementary schools for rallies with students. “There were a million reasons that it wouldn’t work out,” says Tait, “but when you’re in the moment, you just sort of do it.”

The idea was initially sparked back in 1980, when Hill was 10 years old, and he watched on television as Terry Fox struggled to complete his Marathon of Hope. It had a profound impact on Hill, eventually inspiring him to devote himself to a similar adventure that could inspire positive change.

But it would be many years before his own epic run. After finishing high school in Tsawwassen, Hill launched into a film career, appearing alongside Jackie Chan in

(Opposite) the number of shoes it takes to run 369 marathons; Stephanie and Matt in the RV; (this page) victory after 11,000 miles; receiving the Governor General's Award for their achievement



Shanghai Knights, as well as in Steven Spielberg's *Taken*. Later he played the character of Raphael in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III* and then many roles as a voiceover artist. Throughout his career in television and film he retained a deep passion for endurance sports, completing eight Ironman triathlons. In 2006, he met Tait, a motivational speaker and business coach who had also grown up in Tsawwassen. The two shared a passion for running – a bond that would be key in the years to come.

Flying to Detroit in 2006 to attend a fan expo, Hill was struck by the immensity of the landscape below him. He began thinking about running across North America. Eight months after connecting, he and Tait decided that they would do it. "We definitely set our goals high," says Hill. "We wanted to inspire the whole continent."

The pair founded Run for One Planet (R41P) and set to work organizing the run. Hill had a deep interest in environmentalism and in working with youth, so the pair settled on those two themes for their journey. Nine months of planning followed, and they retrofitted an old RV with a worm composter and solar panels. Then, with the support of family and friends, they hit the road. On May 4, 2008 they set off east along the Trans-Canada Highway. Accompanied by a small crew, they ran together each day, clocking at least a full marathon. There were two early goals: to inspire school children to be more proactive environmental citizens, and to show them that through small steps, they could achieve a larger goal.

It would be a trying 369 days. They followed a route through the Rockies, across the prairies and into northern Ontario before crossing through to the Maritimes and Newfoundland. Then they traced their way down the east coast of the U.S. and across to California, before turning northward for their final stretch back to Vancouver. They would run an estimated 22 million steps and speak to 30,000 kids in more than 240 schools across the continent.

Their travels offered them a perspective of two countries in a time of great tumult: the financial crisis of 2008. "Little did we know that we were entering the worst economy since the Great Depression," says Hill, describing the high number of property foreclosures in the neighbourhoods they passed through. They could see the effects in the schools they visited, and they resolved to remain positive. "We focused on what we could control," says Hill. "We could keep running a marathon every day, and we could keep reaching out to people."

There were also more immediate problems. "We faced challenges every step of the way," says Hill. "If we had an encounter with a wild animal, our attitude was to just take

the next step and find a way. If the RV broke down, we just had to take the next step and find a way." They saw their journey as a metaphor for life.

The tour eventually raised \$120,000 for the Run for One Planet Legacy Fund that they created at Vancouver Foundation, with a long-term goal to raise \$1 million. Today the fund provides grants to small grassroots initiatives, like schoolyard gardens, local fruit orchards, solar projects and bike programs for children – endeavours that build on their theme of small steps.

Their run continues to echo in their lives. Tait, who now lives in Toronto and welcomed her first child in August 2017, continues her involvement in the assessment of grant applicants. Hill still lives in B.C. and serves as spokesperson for the Run for One Planet Legacy, speaking to companies and organizations as well as at youth leadership conferences and schools. "It's all about empowering youth to believe in their dream," he says. "To believe it's achievable." ∞



A Donor Advised Fund at Vancouver Foundation is an excellent way to provide long-term support for your favourite charities. For more information, call Kristin in Donor Services at 604.629.5186 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give.

Culinary Connections



Hayat Shabo, Karen Reed,
and Carmen Aldakhlallah
enjoy a late summer meal

For a Syrian mother and daughter, cooking has been a way to build community during their settlement in Vancouver

By **MARCIE GOOD** | PHOTOS **ROBERT KARPA**

On a sunny evening in late August, about 60 people are gathered in Karen Reed's East Vancouver backyard. They sit in chairs – around tables on the patio and on the grass in tight circles – and stand near the open doors of the home. Most of them are neighbours, chatting easily about renovation nightmares, travel plans, new movies. A rich assortment of foliage, blooms and mature trees around the perimeter of the yard gives the gathering a sense of intimacy.

The conversations lull as Reed introduces two women that most guests know already: Carmen Aldakhlallah, a 25-year-old with a vibrant array of curls, and her mother, Hayat Shabo, who conveys warmth and energy without knowing much English. It's been almost a year since the two of them stepped on a plane for the first time in Beirut, leaving their war-torn Syrian home and arriving in Vancouver as refugees. They were sponsored by about 25 of these neighbours, who raised funds to cover their travel and living expenses and then helped them adjust to their new lives. But to Reed, their presence in this community has added a new and welcome dimension. "They are a gift," says Reed to the gathering. "They have enriched our lives in so many ways."

Over the next several hours, the neighbours enjoy an immense feast of Damascus cuisine, prepared by Shabo and Aldakhlallah. The platters include: yalanji, rice and veggie mix painstakingly wrapped in grape leaves; kebbeh, thin squares of minced beef with spices and walnuts; freekeh, roasted grain with lamb and almonds; hummus and home-baked pita. Several of the individually crafted entrees appear so festive that many guests mistake them for cookies.

Food is a central point of many community gatherings, but it has extra significance for Shabo and Aldakhlallah. Shabo began the preparation for the Sunday meal on Wednesday, and she is unfazed by the task of feeding dozens of people. "My mom was famous in Damascus," Aldakhlallah explains. "They liked her kebbeh because it was so thin."

In Syria, Shabo cooked out of her home, supplying a tourist hotel with traditional delicacies and preparing meals for parties. She trained and employed several women to help her keep up with demand. But all of that was put on hold during the civil war that began in 2011. At the time, Aldakhlallah was 19 and starting a degree in French literature at Damascus University. "I just thought, OK, I don't care what's going on. I want to go to university," she recalls. "Because you might die when you're in your place, so why don't I go out and enjoy my life?"



Her mother, however, was worried and cautious, phoning her every time she heard a bomb or a helicopter. During a time of more intense bombing, she and her husband, Bassam, did not allow Aldakhlallah to attend her final exams, and so she had to study an extra year before graduating. She had just started her master's degree in French translation when Shabo, who had hardly left her home for three years, was struck and seriously injured by shrapnel in a missile attack.

All three of Aldakhlallah's older sisters had already left Syria, two of them eventually settling in Victoria. But after the tragic loss of her father, who died in an attack, she and her mother decided to leave as well. For nine months they went back and forth between Damascus and Beirut, a four-hour drive, because they needed to be out of Syria to apply for sponsorship but their visas wouldn't allow them to stay in Lebanon for more than 10 days. Finally, they connected with a church in Calgary, which had been approved by the Canadian government as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder. Karen Reed's neighbourhood group had made an application to the same church, and they were matched up with Aldakhlallah and Shabo. In September 2016, they made the journey to Vancouver.

For Reed's group, the decision to sponsor refugees emerged from years of community building. In 2011, soon after moving to Grandview-Woodlands, Reed started hosting soup nights in an effort to get to know her neighbours better. That small effort grew to an annual progressive dinner, with a series of courses hosted at different homes. Reed found her own connections deepening. "I had a vision," she says. "Could you grow the neighbourhood to the point where it functions as extended family?"



In November 2015, the idea of sponsoring a Syrian family came up at one of these gatherings, and someone asked Reed if she would organize it. She wasn't sure if the community could do it, but 17 people showed up for the first meeting. The group went on to raise \$40,000, and one member rented her basement suite to Aldakhlallah and Shabo.

After they arrived, it didn't take long for Reed to witness Shabo's talents in the kitchen. She thought that a cooking class would be a great way to connect and help the women practise their English vocabulary. Shabo immediately loved the idea. With the help of a Vancouver Foundation Neighbourhood Small Grant of \$450, they held the first class in December 2016 with about 18 people at a neighbour's home. Shabo smiles in recognition when Reed shares a story about her particular attention to detail: after participants in the class tried to cut parsley for tabbouleh, she put it aside and brought out a stash of her own – the students weren't slicing finely enough.

Then, Shabo was asked to prepare food for 200 people at a Vancouver Foundation event called My Mother's Home, at which she was one of four refugee and immigrant mothers to speak about her experience. She also made full menus for several private dinners. While Aldakhlallah hadn't been terribly interested in cooking before, she helped her mother, and they began to talk about starting a catering business.

By August 2017, they started sketching out a business plan for their company, A Taste of Damascus, looking at commercial kitchens and planning menus. Members of the sponsorship group with business skills offered to help them apply for a GST number and plan a budget. "Sometimes I want my mom to be a little more brave, to speak," Aldakhlallah says. "Before, she was the cook, she gives direction to everybody. But here in a foreign country, it's different. So this is a way for her to have a job. She really feels happy when she cooks something and she sees how people eat and how they really like it."



It's certainly true at the late summer dinner at Reed's home, as people stay long after dessert (a version of baklava with shredded phyllo pastry, pistachios and honey, loosely translated as "Between the Fire"), chatting beside tall torchlights. Aldakhlallah's two sisters, Mari and Claire, are here from Victoria with their families, including one small curly-haired boy who was born just months before the family's arrival in Canada. All of them glow with the energy of reunion.

The past year has been full of challenge, says Aldakhlallah, but she knows that she and her mother have come a long way. "We always give thanks for the people who brought us here," she tells the group, translating for her mom. "They give us hope to start a new life. And we really consider them as part of our family now." ∞

Find out if there's a Neighbourhood Small Grants program in your area at vancouverfoundation.ca/nsg. You can also help support Neighbourhood Small Grants with a donation. Call Calvin in Donor Services at 604.629.5357 for more information.

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Sarah Sidhu's involvement with Vancouver Foundation reflects her desire to work for social justice

By ROBERTA STALEY | PHOTO ROBERT KARPA

SARAH SIDHU WAS SIX YEARS OLD and watching, as was her habit, the CBC evening news with her family. It was April 17, 1982, and Queen Elizabeth II, dressed in a subdued blue coat and matching pillbox hat, sat alongside then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau in Ottawa to sign the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the part of the Canadian constitution guaranteeing all citizens certain civil and political rights. "I remember asking what the Charter was and why it was important," Sidhu says. "This was when I became interested in the law."

It wasn't a stretch to predict that the curious and precocious young girl, who would run home at lunch from elementary school in Port Coquitlam, B.C., to watch black-and-white reruns of the American legal drama *Perry Mason*, would become a lawyer. After obtaining a political science degree from Simon Fraser University, Sidhu indeed went to law school at the University of Manitoba (U of M). But despite growing up on the theatricality of *Perry Mason*, she did not aspire to defence litigation. Instead, Sidhu became enamoured with the quiet but powerful ideals upheld by jurisprudence: justice, fairness and equality. The practice of law, she realized, could be a way to be very impactful in the community.

Since graduating from law school, Sidhu has juggled legal practice with volunteer work to help effect positive social change. Currently, she is an independent member of the board of directors of Vancouver Foundation, and for the past three years, served as United Way of the Lower Mainland's representative on the board. She also holds several other volunteer positions within the organization: chair of the Health and Social Development Committee; vice-chair of the Governance and Human Resources Committee; member of the Grants and Community Initiatives Committee; and chair of Giving Well, a giving circle that brings women together to engage in grant-making and collectively support women's issues.

Sidhu's ambition to make a positive impact on society complements Vancouver Foundation's vision of building healthy, vibrant and livable communities. She points to the opioid crisis – there were 914 fatal overdoses across British Columbia last year – as topping her list of concerns. Homelessness and a lack of social housing are also high on her agenda. "Vancouver Foundation is looking at things through a long-term lens and focusing on finding meaningful solutions," says Sidhu, who works as general counsel and corporate secretary for Destination Canada, a Crown corporation that markets Canada abroad.

Throughout her career, Sidhu has found a diversity of platforms to effect change. She was editor-in-chief of the *Manitoba Law Journal* while still a student and worked at U of M's pro bono clinic. One memorable case, she says, involved working with a young mother who was arrested for stealing diapers for her baby. Sidhu ventured into politics as a young adult, but behind the scenes. She volunteered on political campaigns and, as an undergrad and law school student, worked for a federal cabinet minister. She also made sure to nab a front-row seat to the 1996 United States presidential race by moving to Washington, D.C., to intern at a consulting firm – in order to "be in the thick of it."



Vancouver Foundation is looking at things through a long-term lens and focusing on finding meaningful solutions.



Later, in 2012, Sidhu became the British Columbia co-chair of Justin Trudeau's federal election campaign. "I really liked what I had heard about him as a leader," Sidhu says. The fact that Sidhu became pregnant during the campaign didn't slow her down. Her daughter Serena became a fixture in the Vancouver headquarters, learning to crawl as the 2015 election date drew closer and earning the moniker "unofficial third co-chair."

Sidhu is convinced that volunteering is something that anyone of any age can – and should – undertake, even when juggling career and family. She says the key is to find something you're passionate about. "Knowing that maybe you're making a little bit of an impact is important," she says, "and making something easier for somebody else." ∞

Artistic Ability

Once forced to live in a senior's care facility, Teresa Pocock has created a home, and a body of work, in Gastown

By ROBERTA STALEY

VANCOUVER'S GASTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD,

abutting the Downtown Eastside, is known for its red brick buildings, cobblestone roadways, graffitied walls, steam clock, Woodward's and Dominion buildings, tech cluster and busy restaurants and pubs. The people who navigate its streets are as heterogeneous as their environment: entrepreneurs, academics, artists and activists, as well as those struggling with poverty and addiction.

Seated at a sturdy wooden table in a sleek, minimalist Gastown condo is Teresa Pocock. By way of greeting, she throws her arms in the air, exclaiming, "I am a self-advocate!" – a sincere and indisputable declaration. It wasn't an easy journey, but Pocock has learned to express herself as an artist and an activist, drawing the attention of thousands of people including politicians.

Pocock was inspired to become a working artist thanks in large part to a \$1,000 Vancouver Foundation Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grant in 2016, which motivated her to create enough individual works to launch a solo show. "It really helped Teresa blossom into a professional artist," says older sister Franke James, with whom she lives, along with brother-in-law Bill James, in the Gastown home filled with books and art.

Pocock's inaugural exhibit premiered June 29, 2016 and showcased an array of richly illustrated poetry, mounted bus-poster size on the walls of Gastown's Gallery Gachet. Opening night doubled as the book launch for Pocock's self-published *Pretty Amazing: How I Found Myself in the Downtown Eastside*, and a selection of the book's poems and illustrations were part of the exhibit. The bold verse, as well as



the jewel-coloured art, show an individual who is confident about asserting her place in the world, writing in the poem *I Am Alive*: "Redeemed/Okay, I am reborn/In Gastown."

"Now she can say she's an artist and a poet," says Bill. "It has given her a huge sense of purpose to her life."

What makes these accomplishments so significant – extraordinary even – is that Pocock has Down syndrome. As her book title alludes, her life has not followed a simple course. In early 2013, Pocock's elderly father, with whom she lived in Toronto, had failing health and was about to move to a care home. Several siblings placed Pocock, the youngest of seven, in a long-term seniors care facility without their father's approval. Franke and Bill, along with Pocock's dad, spent four days wrangling with government officials, nursing home management and even the police to get her out. Pocock then went to live permanently with Franke and Bill.

That wasn't the end, however. With the help of Franke and Bill – who are business partners in the communications firm The James Gang, Iconoclasts – Pocock made a campaign video for the website change.org protesting her confinement and demanding atonement while asserting the rights of the disabled. The petition, launched on World Down Syndrome Day on March 21, 2014, called out the Ontario government for supporting her placement in an institution that was clearly unsuited



Teresa with
her sister
Franke James

to her age – she was then 49 – abilities and temperament. In the video, Pocock calls for an apology from the government for denying her human rights. “I was crying and scared,” Pocock says to the camera. “It’s my right to decide where to live ... I did not want to be there.” She received 26,000 online signatures of support.

In November 2016, as a result of public pressure and media attention, Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Eric Hoskins wrote a letter of apology to Pocock. Franke framed it and hung it in the front hallway.

That wasn’t the only time Pocock has attracted the attention of politicians. At the opening of her gallery show, a staff member of Vancouver East MP Jenny Kwan presented Pocock with a certificate from Kwan, applauding her “wonderful drawing, creativity and achievement.” It is also framed and hangs in Pocock’s bedroom.

Since the exhibit, Pocock has been drawing nearly every day in her artist’s sketchbooks. Her inspiration has become Gastown itself, edgy despite its gentrification, noisy and raw, a working harbour with cargo ships loading and unloading in Burrard Inlet. Pocock draws what is around her: the geometric pattern of windows on the Woodward’s building; her favourite coffee shop Prado; London Drugs; Nesters Market and, most endearing to Pocock, The Flying Pig bistro, with its homemade macaroni and cheese, and

desserts. “I like chocolate cake,” says Pocock, who does yoga, plays Scrabble and reads in her spare time.

“Teresa’s art shows what she cares about, what she is feeling and thinking and what she’s afraid of and excited about,” says Franke. “She shows that she belongs in the world.”

Pocock has another project in the works; she is planning what Franke describes as “an unconventional, freewheeling cookbook” full of her favourite foods. “We thought the book could have information about the neighbourhood and where Teresa actually gets the food.” As with her first publication, it too will be filled with images and drawings. “And we’ll go to the Flying Pig,” Pocock adds.

Franke muses on her younger sister’s influence in Gastown. “In society, there is a tendency to take people who are different and segregate and hide them away. When Teresa is out in the world, it brings out good things in people. Like at restaurants, they will bend over backwards because Teresa is with us. We call it the Teresa Effect.” ∞

To learn more about the Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grants program visit vancouverfoundationsmallarts.ca. You can also help support this program with a donation. Call Kristin in Donor Services at 604.629.5186 for more information.



Through the Living Archive, the Nuu-chah-nulth people are documenting their ancestors' cultural artifacts held in institutions around the world

By JACOB PARRY

Finding Lost Treasures

WHEN MARIKA SWAN SET ABOUT CATALOGUING the disappearance of thousands of cultural objects of the Nuu-chah-nulth people, her goals were modest. “At first, we really only wanted to see what was out there,” she says. For Swan, a carver of Nuu-chah-nulth descent, that archive would be a natural extension of the Carving on the Edge Festival, an annual event that brings together artisans, band members and the general public to celebrate her nation’s intricate tradition of wood carving. Many of them understood the urgency of her mission. The post-contact decades of colonialism had stripped the Nuu-chah-nulth of much of their material culture. Now they wanted it back.

“It’s about the survival of our culture,” says Swan, relaying the story of her father. “He worked hard – from a child who was in residential school to a thriving and proud First Nations carver. Our elders created the space for us and they want us to step into it.”

To that end, in 2010 a group of Nuu-chah-nulth carvers and elders came together on a stormy day at a carving shed in Tofino. Over the next three days they gathered ideas on how to share and perpetuate the traditions and teachings of West Coast carving, and on how they could transmit this learning to the Nuu-chah-nulth youth. Later that year they launched the first Carving on the Edge Festival.

By now, the festival has grown into a major event in Tofino. Over the course of four days, carvers, artists, elders, curators and members of the public convene at the Shore Building. Part art gallery, part carving workspace and part community centre, the hall acts as meeting place for master and emerging carvers alike. Skilled carvers offer workshops on how to make simple woodblock prints, spoon carvings, and complex bentwood box construction. From the pier outside the hall, guides take out groups in traditional dugout canoes to nearby Meares Island to see the old growth forests. “We want to connect them with the land and the materials harvested for carving – the lifespan of a cedar tree,” says Swan, who serves as the festival’s co-ordinator.

The festival was as much for the general public as for the carvers themselves. “I’m really invested in creating cultural bridges and finding new ways for communities to come together to share what they have,” says Swan. “I know that each of us has something to offer, each of us has another piece to add to the puzzle.”

That means connecting community members to a painful past that saw Nuuchahnulth villages up and down the coast of Vancouver Island stripped of their most valuable cultural objects.

In 1778, Captain James Cook visited Nootka Sound and Clayoquot Sound, where he was gifted a club made from a yew tree. From then to the early 20th century, thousands of carved items were traded, looted and sold out of the villages on the coast, to institutions and collectors across North America and Europe. Objects like rattles, masks and hats found themselves in the collections of institutions as far away as the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and the British Museum in London.

In 1951, the federal government ended its ban on potlatches – which along with residential schools had devastating effects on the Nuuchahnulth people and culture. The removal of the most draconian laws allowed the space for a revival to take root. “Once the potlatch ban was lifted, people of my father’s generation consulted with the elders and started to bring our dances back out of hiding,” says Swan.

The revival of carving prompted them to visit the museums and archives, like the Royal B.C. Museum, that had become repositories of their works. “Carving is a really healing activity,” says Swan. “Many who turned to it did so because it helped us through tough times. We are able to focus, sit down with the wood and spend time with it.”

Now Swan is taking up the next stage of this revival: she’s trying to track down and catalogue the thousands



of cultural artifacts that are scattered around the world. “There are huge bodies of items, headdresses, carvings from this area in museums all over the world,” she says. “I’m only scratching the surface.”

Following the example of the Haida, Swan has established a working group of community members that will determine the goals for the archive. She notes that the group does not have the authority to be involved in repatriation – that only happens between museums and First Nations governments. “Together we hope to find innovative ways to gain better access to these ancestral items,” she says, “and to support cultural revitalization efforts.”

Swan has also started a public education campaign, reaching out to band members to gather their input. She has been a staple at community gatherings, seated with her binders full of images of valuable artifacts, offering elders and schoolchildren alike an opportunity to ask questions and peruse through images of items from their past, now held in distant museums.

Thanks in part to a \$142,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation, the Nuuchahnulth are well prepared to build out the Living Archive into an effective cultural reclamation project.

Swan says that when she visits an institution that holds one of these treasures, it’s an experience akin to visiting a family member. “You’re going down hallways, past desks, and then there’s your loved one and you’re so relieved to see them. That’s how it feels – these are really intimate parts of our communities.” ∞

For more information about the Living Archive project, visit carvingedgefestival.com/living-archive. To support important projects like this, call Calvin in Donor Services at 604.629.5357 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give.

Aging Out

After Charlene Hodgson saw the reality of life for a boy without family, she found a way to help

By JESSICA NATALE WOOLLARD

IT WAS ON A TUESDAY IN OCTOBER 2004 that a young man living in a group home in northern B.C. would turn 19. All his life, he had bounced around foster homes until settling here about two years previously. And it *was* home, or would be, until his upcoming birthday.

Then, like thousands of kids in care in British Columbia, he would be cut off from government-funded housing and other supports like food and health care.

Charlene Hodgson, a new teacher at the young man's school, learned about his terrible predicament two weeks before the fated birthday. She and her colleagues helped him find a part-time job and a new home, which they stocked with donated supplies – a bed, pots and pans, dishes, a vacuum.

"Once you turn 19, you're out. And it doesn't matter whether it's May or June or December or January," Hodgson says. "It was the first time I'd really experienced this. And it wasn't an isolated incident. It haunted all of us."

After 35 years of teaching, Hodgson retired in Kelowna. In the spring of 2016 she joined the local chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), a national organization that promotes human rights, public education, and social justice. Around that time, the BC Council of the CFUW (CFUW-BC) adopted a policy that urges the provincial government to provide financial support to all young people who have aged out of foster care, not just those who meet certain stringent criteria, until they turn 25.

One of the first initiatives the CFUW-BC embarked on under its new policy was a Study Circle project, a pilot that brought together members in four cities with local organizations, community members, and youth who have aged out of care, to have conversations about the barriers they face. These include high rates of homelessness, disability, mental health issues, substance use, isolation and poverty.

The aim was to discuss which supports were already in place and which weren't, and to identify community-specific action items that could improve the outcomes of this vulnerable population. The Study Circle project was funded by a \$35,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation.

The four pilot communities – Kelowna, Vancouver, North Vancouver and Victoria – held six study circle



sessions over two months in the fall of 2016. Then, they merged for a provincial action forum held in Vancouver.

Audrey Hobbs Johnson of the North Vancouver CFUW was the project coordinator of the Study Circle project. She says the circles were an excellent starting point because they engaged the youth and adults in a reciprocal conversation. Now, CFUW-BC is using the information gathered to devise a five-year plan. "We're looking at what we can put in place that will really support youth aging out of foster care, that will prevent the mental health issues, drug-related issues and homelessness," she says. "We know we aren't going to solve this today, but tomorrow we might."

Hodgson agrees; hope is on the horizon. The Kelowna Study Circle has continued to meet since the provincial action forum. Their first goal was to host a political forum to inform electoral candidates and the general public about key issues facing youth aging out of care. The forum was a success, attended by the majority of candidates. Says Hodgson: "We have an obligation to make sure that all people, no matter who they are, have the support systems that the rest of us enjoy." ∞

For more information about how you can help stem the tide of youth homelessness in British Columbia, call Kristin in Donor Services at 604.629.5186 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give.

700 SUPPORT THE SEVEN HUNDRED

Rallying British Columbians to advocate for youth aging out of foster care

By JESSICA NATALE WOOLLARD

IN THE WEEKS PRIOR to the May 2017 provincial election, SkyTrain stations in Metro Vancouver were impromptu sites of youth advocacy. Young people from Fostering Change's Youth Advisory Circle (YAC) handed out buttons and pamphlets and struck up important conversations with passengers about the difficulties faced by B.C. youth who grow up in foster care.

"It was pretty rad," says Meredith Graham. "Most people don't know the truth about foster care and especially that youth age out at 19."

Graham, who aged out of care a few years ago, along with her YAC allies, were spreading the word about the Support the 700 campaign. A project of Vancouver Foundation's Fostering Change initiative, it seeks to engage electoral candidates and community members in making visible their commitments to these young people.

In B.C., approximately 700 youth age out of foster care every year. With financial support only available to those who meet stringent criteria, they face significant challenges. As a group, they have high rates of homelessness, mental health issues and poverty, as well as low graduation rates. In 2016, Vancouver Foundation's report on youth aging out of care estimates significant annual economic costs – up to \$268 million – from limited employment and earnings potential, and health and criminal justice-related costs. However, the report also asserts that a government investment of \$57 million could improve outcomes and reduce costs.

The Support the 700 team wanted to make this topic an election issue. They set up a website on which B.C. residents could enter their contact information and postal codes, prompting the site to send an email to the candidates in their ridings. The email invited the candidates to make one or more of four pledges, which included commitments to meeting with young leaders from foster care and to advocating for increased funding.

Kris Archie, Senior Manager of Fostering Change, says some candidates received so many emails they asked Vancouver Foundation to post a notice that they had already pledged, so the messages would stop. "We declined," Archie says. "If your constituents care about this issue and want to keep emailing you, we aren't going to stop them."

Meredith Graham speaks to participants at an event for youth in care



Graham and Archie say Support the 700 prompted many conversations. The hashtag #supportthe700 was used widely on social media. Significantly, in one televised debate, the host asked the party leaders a question submitted from a member of the public – if elected, how would you support these youth?

Approximately 150 candidates made at least one pledge commitment, and 41 of these were elected as MLAs. Support the 700 posted their names and which pledges they made and asked British Columbians to hold their MLAs accountable for their election promises.

With the new MLAs sworn in, the next phase can begin. Fostering Change is commissioning research into policies that could benefit youth aging out of care. Additionally, in partnership with First Call, a Vancouver-based advocacy coalition for B.C.'s children and youth, Support the 700 is organizing an event in Victoria in the fall of 2017 that will bring MLAs together with young leaders who have aged out of care for a conversation about ways to improve outcomes.

For Graham and the Support the 700 team, the campaign was a success not only because many candidates pledged to help, but also because it inspired British Columbians.

"Support the 700 really mobilized people and sparked not only conversation but action," Graham says. "I don't want anyone else to ever feel the way I did when I was aging out." ∞

Pulse of the Province

Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs survey captures the most important concerns of people across B.C.

By GUY MACPHERSON

SINCE 1943, Vancouver Foundation has been supporting community projects and programs around the province to the tune of more than a billion dollars. Private citizens, corporations and charities work with the Foundation to create endowment funds, and income generated is given out in grants to initiatives throughout British Columbia.

In order to gain a better appreciation of where money can be directed, Vancouver Foundation often surveys residents to gauge where our heads and hearts are at. Think about it as a doctor checking your temperature, pulse and blood pressure.

In 2016, the Vital Signs survey was conducted in conjunction with market research firm Mustel Group and community foundations across the province. More than 7,100 British Columbians took part.

"It helps us to understand what priorities are emerging in various regions," says Lidia Kemeny, who oversees the project as Director of Partnerships at Vancouver Foundation. "That's really important to understand because we fund throughout British Columbia but we don't always have knowledge and information about what is happening, what trends are shaping and influencing the lives of residents across the province."

One of the findings that stood out to Kemeny was that 53 per cent of respondents who said they wanted to be more involved in their community also claimed they would participate in a local project to help strengthen their neighbourhoods. But when asked whether they had actually participated in a local project in the previous 12 months, only 18 per cent indicated that they had.

53%

*of respondents say they want to be more involved in their community, but only **18%** of them indicated they have in the last 12 months.*

70%

*of respondents say they trust their neighbours, but only **45%** feel new neighbours would be welcomed.*

7.4

average response out of 10 when asked "How often do you feel positive?"

"What this tells us is that we have this amazing opportunity to engage people who are interested in being more involved but may not have found a project or vehicle," says Kemeny.

Another interesting dichotomy is that 70 per cent of us trust our neighbours and 78 per cent feel safe walking alone in our communities, but only 45 per cent feel that someone moving onto their street would be welcomed.

"Our work is all about creating healthy, vibrant and livable communities," says Kemeny. She suggests one way these findings can help is to get us thinking about ways to take action. "What are those things that we can do in our neighbourhoods and communities to actually welcome people? I think that is a pretty important component to our work across the whole province."

But overall we're positive people. When asked to rank the statement "How often do you feel positive?" on a scale of 0 to 10, the average response was 7.4. The same ranking emerged from the question, "To what extent do you lead a purposeful and meaningful life?"

Despite some concerns, our vital signs are looking good. But those concerns still need to be addressed if we want a clean bill of health.

Vancouver Foundation uses the collected data to discover all the issues and challenges in our province. That, in turn, informs the various committees and allows them to prioritize where they put resources. "As a funder, we look at Vital Signs as a tool to help us make good decisions," says Kemeny, "and also to help other community foundations do the same across British Columbia." ∞

Full results of the survey and data can be accessed at vancouverfoundationvitalsigns.ca.

Enduring Power of Attorney Instruments in British Columbia: What an Attorney Can and Cannot Do



By **INGRID TSUI, LL.B., TEP**

AN ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY (“POA”) instrument is a common and excellent estate planning tool. It allows an individual to appoint a person (the “attorney”) to deal with the individual’s financial and legal affairs. The attorney can act on behalf of the individual at any time the individual requests or, commonly, after the individual suffers a loss of mental capacity.

POAs are governed by the Power of Attorney Act (BC) (the “Act”). The Act imposes certain restrictions on the activities of the attorney, which should be taken into consideration both in determining whom to appoint as an attorney and in accepting this role. These include the following:

1. An attorney is required to keep records and produce them at the adult’s request. This includes records relating to joint assets, even if the attorney is the other joint owner.
2. An attorney must keep the adult’s property separate from the attorney’s property, unless the property is a pre-existing joint asset.
3. An attorney may only invest assets in accordance with the authorized investments under the Trustee Act, unless the POA instrument states otherwise. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to restrictions in dealing with private company shares.
4. An attorney may not dispose of property which the attorney knows is subject to a specific gift in a Will, unless necessary to comply with the attorney’s duties.
5. An attorney may not transfer real property to himself or herself, unless the POA specifically authorizes this.
6. An attorney has no authority to make, change or revoke a Will.
7. An attorney cannot delegate his or her responsibility to another person; however, the attorney may retain professionals to assist.
8. An attorney may only charge fees for acting as attorney if the POA specifically allows for compensation and sets out the amount or rate of compensation.
9. An attorney may only make gifts or loans to third parties or charities if: (a) the attorney is satisfied there will be sufficient property remaining to meet the adult’s care, and (b) the adult made gifts or loans of that nature while competent, and (c) the gifts or loans fall within the amounts prescribed by the legislation (which is currently set as the lesser of 10 per cent of the adult’s taxable income for the previous year and \$5,000.00).
10. An attorney can only make beneficiary designations on behalf of the adult if: (a) authorized by the court; (b) renewing, replacing or converting a similar instrument which appoints the same beneficiary (for example, where moving a policy from one institution to another); or (c) making a designation in a new instrument that names only the estate as the beneficiary.

An attorney appointment is a powerful and significant one that should be carried out with care and attention. Seek professional advice when appropriate. ∞

*Ingrid Tsui is a Partner at
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