

January 25, 2010

Vancouver Foundation supports northwest non-profits

Despite a challenging financial picture in 2009, Vancouver Foundation continued to support important community projects throughout British Columbia.

The Foundation and its donors granted more than \$108,000 in funding for five unique projects that address a variety of community issues in northwest BC. These projects are listed below, in alphabetical order by city/area:

Haida Gwaii Museum Society (Haida Gwaii)

\$20,000 to the Haida Gwaii Visual Arts Program, which aims to respond to a critical economic situation on Haida Gwaii. Forestry and fishing are rapidly declining while Haida culture, the arts and the incomparable natural environment are emerging as cornerstones of a new tourism and arts-based economy. This program aims to create and sustain a vibrant, visual arts program on Haida Gwaii that supports emerging and established artists through an ongoing annual series of exhibitions, artist-led workshops and lectures, marketing initiatives and commissions.

Houston Link to Learning Society (Houston)

\$20,815 for the Houston Community Garden and Market Project.

The Community Garden project has already reached out to the most marginalized in our community. This project will help the existing Community Garden grow and further develop the connection between the garden and the local Farmer's Market, while using the garden as a teaching tool. This project aims to facilitate skills development for participants, who can help with fundraising at the market or develop their own skill, craft or talent.

Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Society (New Aiyansh)

\$30,000 to the Nisga'a Summer Language and Cultural Institute.

Nisga'a elders have ancestral knowledge of ethno-botanical plants, their uses and management strategies. This two-week summer institute gives the young generation a chance to learn from the elders and sustain important knowledge and traditions, as well as biological diversity. The course is accredited by UNBC at the Masters' and 4th-year undergraduate level, and is free for elders.

Turning Point Initiative Society (North and Central Coast)

\$25,000 to Coastal Guardian Watchmen Program

This project supports First Nations on the North and Central Coast to build and strengthen their Guardian Watchmen programs, which monitor and protect important cultural and ecological sites throughout their territories. The Guardian Watchmen Monitoring Strategy is a regionally coordinated approach to gathering and analyzing data that contributes to sustainable resource management and the engagement of First Nations in land and marine use plans.

Canadian Red Cross Society, Northern BC and Yukon Region (Northern BC)

\$12,428 for Walking the Prevention Circle, a program that acknowledges the challenges and potential of Aboriginal peoples in a holistic, wellness-based approach to violence abuse and prevention. Facilitated by Aboriginal people, these workshops name abuse,

define the cycle of violence, acknowledge pain and celebrate healing. The first step is delivering four workshops to select First Nations communities.

Vancouver Foundation also funded some province-wide projects that have implications for northern BC:

BC Spaces for Nature Society

\$35,000 to developing a Rivers Classification and Designation System.

British Columbia's rivers support diverse activities, including fishing, agriculture, power generation, transportation, recreation and tourism. This project will develop the first rivers classification and designation system for BC in order to better plan, manage and conserve our province's exceptional river resources.

Ecojustice Canada Society

\$25,000 to *Species and Ecosystem Protection Act* for BC.

BC is one of two provinces in Canada without an endangered species law. Since 2005, the Species at Risk Working Group (which includes Ecojustice, David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, and Western Canada Wilderness Committee) has been raising public awareness and asking the Province to create legislation for BC. They have the support of the municipalities. Now they want to move the project into concrete policy development with government. This grant covers the costs of the legal and scientific expertise of Ecojustice, whose efforts led to similar laws in Ontario and nationally.

BC Aboriginal Child Care Society

\$26,380 to the Aboriginal Parenting and Early Childhood Development Project.

This project aims to create and deliver an Aboriginal train-the-trainer program for facilitators of its parenting programs. They plan to review four Aboriginal parenting program models from other provinces, and combine the strengths into a new model, with a focus on BC Aboriginal culture and needs. They plan to develop a curriculum for parents that stresses the importance of involvement in their child's early years (0-6). A manual will be provided that can be used by many Aboriginal organizations and communities.

First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition

\$45,000 to mobilizing Support for Children and Youth.

This project will work to strengthen public awareness of the importance of, and government commitment to, social investments that improve the well-being of BC's children and youth in response to high child poverty rates and weakened support services for children and youth. Working closely with 90 partner organizations, the project will do public education, community mobilization and policy advocacy. The project includes facilitating talks with government and producing action kits on issues.

With more than 1,300 funds, and assets of \$700 million, Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation. Since it was founded in 1943, Vancouver Foundation, in partnership with its donors, has distributed more than \$740 million to BC charities.

For more information:

**Paul Heraty, Communications
604.688.2204**