

January 25, 2010

## Vancouver Foundation supports Island non-profits

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

The Foundation and its donors granted almost \$350,000 in funding for 15 unique projects that address a variety of community issues on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

These projects are listed below, in alphabetical order by city/area:

### **Dawn to Dawn Action on Homelessness Society (Comox)**

\$60,000 for My Own Apartment Residential Support Program.

The goal is to get people who are homeless or at a high-risk of homelessness into market housing units and support them until they reach independence. People referred from community agencies are given a shared two-bedroom apartment for \$750 per month. The resident agrees to conditions such as using services for addiction, mental health, counselling or employment readiness. The program supports residents as long as it takes for each of them to independently manage their own apartment. Operated entirely by volunteer board members, it launched in June 2008 with two units and four residents and now has seven units and 14 residents.

### **Comox Valley Family Services Association (Comox Valley)**

\$8,250 for Taking Charge of Worries.

This project will offer a series of classes for children aged 7-12, to teach them and their parents to cope with anxiety. By presenting practical information, using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, through discussion, games, role plays, art activities and exercises children learn to manage fears and worries. Parents attend each week to learn the techniques, and ways to encourage confidence in their children.

### **Comox Valley Land Trust (Comox Valley)**

\$20,000 for Conservation Strategy Community Partnership.

In 2008, the Comox Valley Land Trust released the *Nature Without Borders* report, which outlined the Comox Valley Conservation Strategy. Stemming from this report, several local groups have partnered to promote and implement the strategy. It outlines a number of recommendations for implementing regional conservation land use planning as a way to stop ecosystem loss, conserve and restore critical ecological areas, establish wildlife/biodiversity corridors and maintain natural systems.

### **Comox Valley Project Watershed Society (Courtenay)**

\$20,000 for Restoration and Protection of the Courtenay River Estuary.

The Courtenay River Estuary has been severely impacted over the years by industrial activity. It is one of only eight Class I estuaries in BC and is geographically divided into four distinct political jurisdictions with no common agreement as to how it should be protected. Following an estuary symposium in 2008, a working group was formed to collaborate with local governments to protect the estuary, establish monitoring programs, undertake restoration projects and develop awareness programs about the estuary.

**Cowichan Tribes Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum' (Duncan)**

\$40,000 for Community Leadership Initiative.

The Community Leadership Initiative delivers support services to youth, families and communities to increase success rates in school and employment. It aims to improve quality of life for impoverished community members by increasing success of Aboriginal students and opportunities for higher education and employment and building a community network to support them.

**Galiano Club (Galiano Island)**

\$14,000 for Galiano Community Food Program.

The food program promotes food security and sustainability through community gardens, foraging, canning, cooking and community suppers. This program has engaged and excited this small island community. In the first year, the program focused on skill-sharing and community-building. In this next phase, participants will build on these achievements by continuing to develop skills and capacity while reaching out to isolated members and holding community kitchens and suppers. Primary goals include developing a sustainable meals-on-wheels program and supporting youth and families by increasing the number of community gardens.

**Rest.Q Animal Sanctuary Society (Gulf Islands)**

\$12,400 for Animal Stewardship program.

Rest.Q's animal sanctuary cares for more than 140 abused, abandoned and neglected animals, and will use the funding to: spay/neuter feral cats and rabbits in the Gulf Islands; hire summer interns who will learn about animal welfare; purchase new parrot cages to provide care for a growing number of residents; and to purchase cat traps to facilitate the spay/neuter program.

**Georgia Strait Alliance (Nanaimo)**

\$20,000 for A Healthy Georgia Strait.

Most British Columbians live, work and play in and along the shores of Georgia Strait. Yet so many people do not realize their connection to and reliance on this great body of water, or the estuaries, rivers and streams that feed it. This two-year community mapping project will provide tools to help communities recognize some of the threats to coastal waters and take action to reduce their impact and improve the state of the Strait.

**Aventa New Music Society (Victoria)**

\$35,000 for a new opera, *Marilyn*.

Based on Marilyn Monroe, with libretto by BC author and poet Marilyn Bowering, *Marilyn* will receive a production residency in 2010 at the Banff Centre of Fine Arts, with the world premiere scheduled for 2011 in Victoria, BC. It will be presented internationally, bringing BC artists to a world stage.

**Belfry Theatre Society (Victoria)**

\$25,000 for *The Life Inside*

This is a full-length, large-scale piece of theatre written by James Fagan Tait and Joelysa Pankanea, commissioned by the Belfry Theatre. It incorporates ensemble movement, instrumental music and choral singing to narrate a story based on Maurice Maeterlinck's 1895 play *Intérieur*. The cast of 21 actors and four musicians will include professional actors, theatre students, seniors, young people and marginalized members of society.

**Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (Victoria)**

\$20,000 for Strengthening Food Security Foundations.

The third year of this program will improve collaboration within the food system network through newsletters, monthly food roundtables around the region and an annual food

forum. The aim is to address challenges in emergency food provision by researching and developing a food recovery and re-distribution mode. Participants also plan to complete and distribute a Food Resources Directory, and build support for developing a regional food policy framework and a Regional Food Charter.

**Theatre SKAM Association (Victoria)**

\$7,500 for *Bike Ride*.

Theatre SKAM brings local artists together on a project basis. In May 2010, The Homegrown Collective will again present *Bike Ride*, a family-friendly, neighbourhood-focused performance event along Victoria's Galloping Goose Regional Trail. A central hub will welcome audiences (who will be on bikes), and provide amenities before sending groups of cyclists out to view performances at various sites along the trail.

**University of Victoria (Victoria)**

\$21,000 Deaf Studies Pilot Project.

This will provide hearing students with a cohesive program in which they will acquire fundamental skills in American Sign Language and enhanced cultural awareness to enable them to work with Deaf members of society and their families in everyday interactions, as well as emergency situations.

**Vancouver Island University (Greater Victoria)**

\$30,000 for Aboriginal Construction Program and Gathering Place.

This new program melds Aboriginal construction history and methods into a Carpentry Apprenticeship Level 1 Technical Training program, and leads to Industry Training Authority certification. The program responds to the community's desire for employment-related education, and will help Aboriginal students transition to the labour force as skilled workers. Program participants will help build the University's Aboriginal Gathering Place as their showpiece project.

**Victoria READ Society (Victoria)**

\$16,250 for Aboriginal Family Books.

This is a partnership with three First Nations communities - Tseycum, Tsartlip and Tsawout - and the Saanich Indian School Board. Offered on each traditional territory, sessions will run September to December and January to April. The program will take a multi-sensory approach, using themes identified by community members and students such as names, recipes, and family traditions to build writing and story development skills.

*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:**

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