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United Way
Lower Mainland



Family Services
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Creating brighter tomorrows.



YWCA
METRO VANCOUVER



Boys & Girls Clubs
of South Coast BC
A good place to be

Six of BC's Largest Charities Call Upon Government to Reduce the Income, Time and Service Squeeze on Young Families

VANCOUVER (BC), February 6, 2013—As the first ever Family Day approaches, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Foundation, YWCA Metro Vancouver, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Boys & Girls Clubs of South Coast BC, and Family Services of Greater Vancouver are calling upon all political parties to take action to reduce the squeeze on families in British Columbia.

"Collectively we provide millions of dollars of grants and serve hundreds of thousands of men, women, children and teenagers with programs and services that dramatically improve their lives", says Stephen Butz, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver. "But BC is rapidly changing, making it very challenging for families to raise healthy kids." The issues are complex:

- **High Cost of Living:** High housing prices create crushing debt loads, particularly for generations under 45—a debt that must be paid with wages that are lower than previous generations. These men and women are in their prime child rearing years, yet they often are forced to spend many more years and much more money to acquire higher levels of education while attempting to save towards a down payment. And for many, this means they wait years longer to move out of their parents' homes, or to establish financial independence. Most people under 45 can't work their way out of this income squeeze unless they give up something fundamental: the opportunity to have the family they want without eroding the financial foundation they've patched together.
- **Insufficient Time & Services:** Since two wage-earners can barely bring home today what one breadwinner did in the 1970s, families have gone from a 40-hour work week to close to 80 hours. The result? Generations under 45 are squeezed for time at home when children are young. Families often must live in condos or trade yards for time-consuming commutes. And crucial services like child care are in short supply and cost more than university.

"We know that by investing in families, we improve the quality of life for all members of our community," says Faye Wightman, President and CEO of the Vancouver Foundation. "But the growing challenges families face today are beyond the scope of charity support alone. This issue requires the focused attention of all sectors if we are to shift the trajectory to a more healthy, vibrant and resilient future for all British Columbians."

“As charitable organizations, we all help families build stable lives and achieve long-term economic independence,” says Janet Austin, CEO YWCA Metro Vancouver. “However, we as CEOs of major charities know that philanthropy alone cannot reduce the pressure on young families—just as charity alone couldn’t increase income security for seniors before there were public pensions and medical care. We welcome a commitment from provincial and federal governments to invest in policies that reduce the income, time and service squeeze the majority of young families are dealing with.”

“Our organizations are working together in new and progressive ways to tackle these issues, but we can’t do it alone,” says Michael McKnight, President and CEO of the United Way of the Lower Mainland. “That’s why we are asking our government leaders and all political parties to present their action plan to reduce the squeeze on families, so that we can collectively solve these problems.”

All six organizations believe that progress can only be made if the Province of BC and its citizens come together to take action. “Every one of us can take action to reduce the squeeze on BC Families,” says Carolyn Tuckwell, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Coast BC.

- Spread the word. Tell your stories about how the Squeeze is affecting your families, kids or grandchildren. Chat, text, Facebook, tweet, email, gather and petition in common cause to give all generations a chance to reduce the Squeeze.
- Consider how your vote on May 14th can reduce the squeeze for today’s families and future generations.
- Actively choose to spend quality time together as a family on February 11th, by being active, getting outside or trying something new together as a family.

“Regardless of whether you are a parent or not, everyone in the community can take action now so that the next generation of children and families can reach their full potential,” says Caroline Bonesky, CEO of Family Services of Greater Vancouver. “After all, our kids are counting on us. Will you take action?”

– 30 –

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS:

YMCA of Greater Vancouver is a powerful association of men, women and children of all ages and abilities joined together by a shared commitment: to strengthen community. We accomplish this goal by helping vulnerable children and families, promoting healthy living and reducing isolation. Last year alone, the YMCA helped more than 100,000 children, youth, adults, families and seniors become stronger through life-enhancing programs and services.

Vancouver Foundation helps build more vibrant and resilient communities in BC. We do this by harnessing the gifts of energy, ideas, time, and money of caring citizens to make meaningful and lasting impacts. We are Canada’s largest community foundation and we have been investing in communities since 1943.

YWCA Metro Vancouver is a registered charity providing a range of integrated services for women and their families, and those seeking to improve the quality of their lives. From early learning and care to housing, health and fitness, employment services and leadership, YWCA Metro Vancouver touches lives in our communities.

United Way of the Lower Mainland is a charitable organization established over eighty years ago to support those in need in Metro Vancouver. Today, we are dedicated to creating healthy, caring and inclusive communities by breaking the cycle of poverty, helping school-aged children make the right life choices, and supporting seniors to age with dignity. By raising millions of dollars each year, mobilizing the commitment of community leaders, investing in innovative research and programs, and raising our voice for progressive social policy, United Way acts as a catalyst for change.

Boys & Girls Clubs of South Coast BC For 75 years, BGC has been giving children and youth something they deserve: a safe place to belong when they aren't at home or at school. To kids, their Club feels like a place where they can hang out with their friends, and make new ones! But it's so much more. It's a place that provides them with three of the things they need most: a sense of belonging, a sense of success, and positive relationships. That happens through a wide range of activities that are not only of interest to kids, but that are good for them, too: sports, homework, safe access to the on-line world, arts, crafts, and of course, sharing meals. Annually, we serve more than 10,000 children, youth, and families -- and *no one is ever turned away due to an inability to pay*. No one.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver At some point in life, everyone gets stuck. Since 1928, Family Services of Greater Vancouver has been helping to create brighter tomorrows for children, youth, adults, and families across Metro Vancouver. We work to inspire and support those in our community who need help to reach their full potential: children are nurtured, youth find optimism, adults feel empowered, and parents make choices that build strong families.

For further information or to schedule an interview with any of our organizations, please contact:

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For more information about the Squeeze, and the policy solutions available, see gensqueeze.ca.