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Fall 2013

vancouver foundation

stories of modern philanthropy

FOSTERING CHANGE

Preventing youth
homelessness

NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

A conversation with
Kevin McCort

REVIVING BLACK STRATHCONA

Fabulous but forgotten
history revived

A SAFE PLACE FOR SECOND CHANCES

Whalley women's
drop-in a labour
of love



THE
*smart &
caring*
ISSUE

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PM 40065475



Using our heads and hearts to build community

We're proud to celebrate Vancouver Foundation's 70th year, and even more so the individuals whose leadership, dedication and generosity have brought us to this milestone anniversary – from the generous gifts of Alice MacKay and our founders, to the current generation of donors who continue this legacy by investing in their community through Vancouver Foundation.

One of our 11 founders was F.R. Graham. We feel privileged to present in this issue a feature story on his daughter Sheila Ross, who proudly carries on the family tradition of donating to charity, and keeps the Graham legacy alive through Vancouver Foundation (see page 18). We also feature Jack Gin (on page 16), whose history with the Foundation is more recent, but whose contribution has already made a lasting impact on his and many other communities.

Our longevity is a testament to the foresight and generosity of all our donors. It's also the product of the hard work and dedication of Foundation staff who continually build upon our reputation for excellence. We must acknowledge the contribution of Faye Wightman, who, over the last eight years, has steered our organization through the challenges of economic instability, unprecedented growth in public awareness, and a strategic expansion.

The contributions of many community champions over the years have set the stage for the Foundation to embrace a new era of philanthropy – an era marked by rapidly changing technology, innovation, creativity, accountability and transparency. Despite society's progress, many of the social challenges that people faced in 1943 – poverty, homelessness and isolation – still exist today. Demand for funding and support continues to outweigh what is needed to keep pace with growing social needs.

Modern philanthropy is not just about caring from the heart. There must be a strong link between head and heart, combining a genuine desire to address social issues that matter, with smart, strategic granting decisions and investments that will make a measurable difference.

Our approach to philanthropy embraces both heart and head. The announcement of our Smart & Caring Community Fund in June gave new impetus to our priority areas – preventing youth homelessness, and strengthening communities by engaging residents in their neighbourhoods.

Through our Youth Homelessness Initiative we are investing in the future with programs that focus on prevention; programs that go beyond dealing with the symptoms and address root causes. For example, in "Fostering Change" (page 9), an innovative program at Aunt Leah's Place in New Westminster is helping young people like Robert Davidson, who are transitioning out of government care, to develop life skills that will help keep them off the streets and ensure they have a running start at life.

As part of our commitment to connect residents and build bridges between cultures, we expanded our Neighbourhood Small Grants program this year. On page 20, you can read about the selfless efforts of two Surrey residents who used their small grant to help vulnerable women in their community express themselves through creative arts.

As 2013 draws to a close, we are approaching a new chapter at Vancouver Foundation. We will continue to be challenged by the growing demand for community support, tested by the competing needs within our community, and defined by the actions we take on the pressing issues of the day.

Together with our community partners, and the support of donors like you, we will continue to use both head and heart to create smart, caring communities throughout BC not only for today, but also for a better tomorrow.



Kevin McCort
President and CEO
Vancouver Foundation

Gord MacDougall
Chair, Board of Directors
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Here are a few of the projects Vancouver Foundation and our donors recently supported



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The Nectar Trail

For millennia, bees have flown from one plant to the next, gathering nectar and pollinating as they go. It's an important role – an estimated 30 per cent of the world's food crops and 90 per cent of wild plants rely on bees for pollination. But due to increasing land development, bees in Vancouver are facing hard times. Areas of green space, where the bees can live and interact, have been reduced to "habitat islands" in urban areas.



The Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) aims to protect bees in the face of urbanization. With help from the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Park Board, EYA's new Nectar Trail initiative will develop the Ridgeway Greenway between Queen Elizabeth Park and VanDusen Gardens into a green space corridor.

Thanks to a \$20,000 environment grant from Vancouver Foundation, Nectar Trail will help create habitat-rich sites in the corridor, and bees will have safer passage between Queen Elizabeth Park and VanDusen Gardens. Human visitors to the trail will benefit too – at designated sites along the way, you will be able to scan a QR code (barcode) with your smartphone to access interactive new media, such as videos and websites, that demonstrate the value of the project and explain site-specific information.

The Nectar Trail is creating quite a buzz. Find out more at <http://nectartrail.com> – Graham Lee

All bodies are good bodies

Lovable is a photography program for young women. Organized by two young photographers – Nicola Hodges and Sylvia McFadden – its goal is to empower women to fight back against unrealistic beauty standards and the ad campaigns aimed at women's bodies. Lovable will use digital photography to radically shift views of the female body. Working out of the Purple Thistle in east Vancouver, many of the photo shoots will happen outdoors and around the city at community gardens, parks and other public spaces.

Vancouver Foundation's Youth Philanthropy Council awarded the project \$5,000 to help keep it free for participants, as well as cover costs for mentors, a photography e-zine and a launch event.



Coyote Café: The write stuff

Aboriginal students at four north Okanagan elementary schools are discovering the joy of reading, thanks to a successful after-school reading program called Coyote Café. Twice a week for 25 weeks, participants get a healthy snack and one-to-one reading support, plus take part in group reading, literacy games, trips to the library and even outdoor activities. Based on a strong cultural practice of drumming, songs and enriched aboriginal content, the program provides literacy support to struggling readers to help boost their reading skills, their self-confidence and their enjoyment of reading.

Coyote Café is a partnership between School District 83's Aboriginal Education department, Literacy Alliance, Okanagan Library and the First Nations Education Council. It has proven so successful with elementary readers that organizers want to extend the program to three middle schools. With a grant of \$53,500 from Vancouver Foundation, Coyote Café hopes to enhance aboriginal student success by creating a fun environment that also encourages respect of language and culture.

You want fries with that elegy?

Since 1995, Word Vancouver has presented a wide range of author readings and events as part of the annual Vancouver Book and Magazine Fair. The intent is to advance education and literacy, and increase public appreciation of literature. This year, it was a new addition to the regular poetry programming that people were most excited about: the Automated Poetry Project.

With a grant of \$7,500 from Vancouver Foundation, organizers acquired five vending machines that dispense poems written by poets from BC and across Canada.

Word Vancouver partnered with local coffee shops and bookstores to host vending machines as well as poetry readings by the authors for the month leading up to the festival. And now that the festival is over, the vending machines continue to generate funds for next year's festivities.

The Vancouver Book and Magazine Fair held its inaugural festival in 1995, at the then-newly-built Vancouver Public Library; the one-day event attracted 18,000 people. Today, the Fair is one of the premiere events in Western Canada's literacy and literary community, spanning four days and attracting almost 30,000 attendees.



Photos: Erin Udal (insect hotel), iStock (honeybee)

Photos: courtesy of Bryan Pike (Poetry Cigarettes), iStock (boy with book, girl with camera)



A conversation with *Kevin McCort*

Vancouver Foundation's new president and CEO, Kevin McCort, is ready to connect and engage with the community

Kevin McCort assumed the reins as new president and CEO of Vancouver Foundation in September, following the retirement of Faye Wightman. A seasoned veteran of the not-for-profit sector, McCort joins the Foundation following an impressive 20-year career with CARE Canada, the last six years as president and CEO in Ottawa. McCort has lived, worked and travelled in more than 50 countries and brings to the job a wealth of experience. We had a brief opportunity to sit down with McCort and ask a few questions about his career and the future.

You joined Vancouver Foundation after a 20-year career with CARE Canada in Ottawa. What appealed to you about working at Vancouver Foundation?

The work Vancouver Foundation does at the “grassroots” level with community-based organizations is very inspiring. To be able to interact on a day-to-day basis with people working to address important social issues in their community is highly motivating. Also, the scope

of the Foundation's work covering its various funding areas, along with the commitment of staff to engage diverse partners in the community, gain meaningful insights into community concerns and address those issues in a substantive manner has always impressed me.

How did you get involved in the not-for-profit sector?

My earliest exposure to the sector was my community 4-H club as a teenager. The 4-H pledge to commit head, heart, hands and health to community service still resonates with me to this day.

A gap-year cultural exchange with Canada World Youth (Indonesia) connected me to international development issues. I went on to study international development/resource management at the University of Toronto, which led to postings in Mali and Zimbabwe with World University Service of Canada when I was in my early 20s.

By that point, my career directions were well established, as I was seeing many examples of how assistance targeted to the needs and opportunities of some of the poorest communities in the world was making a real difference in people's lives.

You've been working in philanthropy for upwards of three decades. What's kept you invested in this sector after all these years?

There are inspiring stories everywhere of people making a difference in their own lives, or the lives of others, by working together. I find great satisfaction in working with others to achieve meaningful goals. Our sector brings people together around causes that matter, so we work with people fuelled by passion, with deep patience and compassion. Working with committed people in that environment has always inspired me.





What do you consider to be the biggest challenge facing not-for-profits today?

The enormous diversity of our sector can be both a great opportunity and, at times, a big challenge. Our sector needs innovation and new ideas, but we often create new organizations rather than building on existing ones. The downside of this can be too many actors pursuing the same donor, client, policy goal or staff, leading to needless competition and inefficiencies.

I serve on the board of Imagine Canada, and we've heard that finding resources and staff are big challenges for many charities, but we also struggle as a sector to get out the stories of our success. There is so much good news, but not always enough of it gets shared.

You've worked in hot spots all over the world. What's your most memorable experience?

My memorable experiences fall into two categories, both extremes. The images and personal stories from refugees I met in camps created after the genocide in Rwanda, or after the droughts in Somalia, were powerful and traumatic, yet motivated me in my humanitarian work with CARE for years.

On the bright side, I often think of the women who participated in micro-savings and finance programs in rural Africa whose lives were transformed by the financial knowledge they gained, and the support of a community savings group. We were able to measure and attribute improvements in household income, health status of children, and increased and longer school enrolment as a result of our programs. In one community in rural Zimbabwe, domestic violence also fell as many families were able to deal more effectively



Our sector brings people together around causes that matter, so we work with people fuelled by passion, with deep patience and compassion. Working with committed people in that environment has always inspired me.”

with the stresses that were contributing factors to violence against women.

How do you see the work you've done in the field internationally translate into the work Vancouver Foundation does at the community level?

CARE's international development work is community-based and led. We worked directly with farmers, refugees, migrant workers and the urban poor to better understand their needs, options and aspirations, then designed program interventions based on our interaction and understanding of their issues. I see many parallels, from design to implementation, monitoring, reporting (to donors and the community itself), learning and research in the work we did internationally with what Vancouver Foundation does at the community level.

My international work also had me engaging with governments, private sector, and media, both to communicate about our work, but also to

engage the broader group of stakeholders who are often needed to find sustainable solutions to pressing issues.

Having just moved from Ottawa, what are you going to do now that you can't skate on the Rideau Canal in the winter?

I've been telling lots of people about our move to Vancouver and, judging by the number of people who said they will come to visit, I think we will be showing visitors around this beautiful region for some time to come. When not acting as tour guide, paddling, hiking and skiing are all high on our family's to-do list. **VF**



FOSTERING

BY MARTIN LIVINGSTON
PHOTOS BRIAN HAWKES

CHANGE

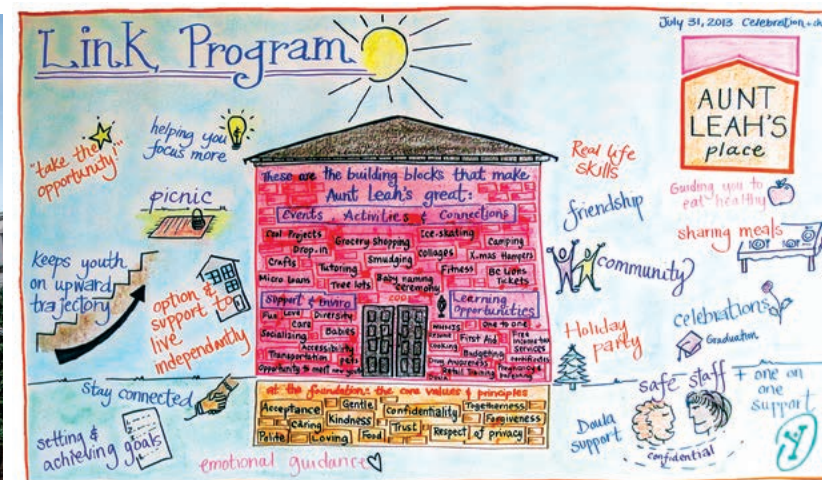
Youth aging out of government care find support as they transition to adulthood – and independence

(above) Robert Davidson has learned to live independently thanks to Aunt Leah's Place.

Robert Davidson, 19, has been fending for himself ever since he can remember.

The youngest of three brothers, the Surrey youth was initially raised by a single mother. A health care worker at Vancouver General Hospital, she contracted Hepatitis C when Davidson was six years old. She was placed on disability and spent the next nine years in and out of hospital, battling the infectious disease and complications from diabetes.

Meanwhile, Davidson and his brothers were placed in various foster homes and respite care. By the time Davidson was 13, his mother's condition turned critical and she was spending most of her time in hospital. His once-secure home environment was turned upside down. With no adult supervision, his middle brother turned the family home into a party house, where cocaine and alcohol flowed freely.



(facing page, clockwise from left) Gale Stewart, Angelina Oakes, Husain Vahanvaty and Roshine Morrison are building a brighter future for foster kids.

(centre) Aunt Leah's Place; (this page) Gale Stewart, executive director.

"I knew my mom was dying and I just kind of withdrew," he says. Depressed and unable to cope with his home environment, he left the house, stopped going to school, and started bunking with friends and staying out all night.

His mother passed away when he was 15. Davidson was taken in by the foster family in Cloverdale that was already caring for his middle brother. "It was a good home, but I couldn't take their rules, so I left," he recalls.

He went back to couch surfing. He roamed the streets and got involved in petty crime. "Sometimes I stayed up for 24 hours straight or slept in parks."

Eventually, he reached out to the social worker he was assigned when his mother was in hospital, and was introduced to the Support Link Program at Aunt Leah's Place. "It changed my life," he says. "It brought me out of my shell. I learned to express myself. It was a safe, comfortable environment where I learned how to live independently and responsibly."

For 25 years, Aunt Leah's Place, in New Westminster, has been working to help prevent children in foster care from becoming homeless, and young mothers in need from losing custody of their children. By providing secure housing, financial support, job training and coaching on essential life skills in a safe, supportive environment, Aunt Leah's Place has helped more than 1,000 youth and 500 single

“
Before becoming involved in the program, I was basically a hoodlum. Now I'm more responsible and know how to live independently. I'd like to take what I've learned and raise my children a lot differently from how I was brought up.”

-Robert Davidson

"Most 19- and 20-year-olds are still living at home, and being supported by their parents. On average, young people from mainstream families live in the family home until their mid- to late 20s. Youth in government care, on the other hand, are expected to make their way in the world when they turn 19, with no support structure in place.

mothers to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and successfully transition from foster care to independent living.

Youth in government care are particularly susceptible to ending up homeless. In BC, when youth in care turn 19 they are considered adults and lose all support from the provincial government. The expectation is that these vulnerable youth have the skills to function as self-sufficient, independent adults. The stark reality is that almost half of homeless youth in Vancouver were once in government care. More than two-thirds of youth in care in BC will turn 19 without a high school diploma. Nearly half will be involved in the criminal justice system, and half will go on income assistance within a few months of their 19th birthday.

Gale Stewart, founder and executive director of Aunt Leah's Place, was a foster parent for 10 years in the 1980s along with her husband Paul. She quickly recognized there were massive gaps in support services for young people leaving foster care.

"Aunt Leah's is very much fashioned after what a grandmother, grandfather, uncle or aunt would do to support a child who was dependent on them," says Stewart. "That is, to provide the practical life skills needed to launch a young person into adulthood."

Stewart also developed the Support Link Program, which provides teens about to age out of foster care with semi-independent suites by pairing them with a friendly landlord and a support worker who will teach them how to set goals and live on their own.

Davidson entered the Support Link Program two years ago. Support workers helped him find an apartment to rent and he started attending their essential life skills meetings. "I learned how to budget, how to shop, how to cook, basically how to take care of myself," he says. "If I didn't go to those meetings I'd probably still be eating mini pizzas and pizza pops, because that's all I ate when I was younger."

In 2010, Vancouver Foundation gave Aunt's Leah's Place a \$175,000 three-year grant to establish its Link Program. "The Link" provides youth who have turned 19 and aged out of care, as well as past participants of the Support Link Program, with a support worker who helps them look for jobs, finish school, find housing and connect with community services. The Foundation provided additional funding this year to extend the program.

The Link Program has been a resounding success. At the end of its second year, more than 80 per cent of the 36 youth enrolled in the program had found secure housing. This year, another 75 young people have entered the program.

The support services available through the Link Program are reflective of the type of policy changes Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative is hoping the BC government will

implement by extending foster care support services beyond 19 to provide a continuum of care for foster youth into adulthood.

After turning 19 in February, Davidson entered the Link Program. Aunt Leah's provided a tutor to help him brush up on math skills as well as a \$150 monthly housing subsidy so he could complete his high school education.

After graduating Grade 12 this year, Davidson received certification in Health Canada's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). He's now working full time in waste disposal and plans to move to northern BC to work in the resource sector.

"Being a foster kid can be tough some days," reflects Davidson. "Some days all you're looking for is something to lift the weight off your shoulders. The Link Program does that."

"Sometimes I see kids standing around the same street corner I used to hang out on," says Davidson. "I just want to go up to them and give them a shake and tell them to get their life together."

These days, Davidson has his sights set on starting a family and one day owning his own home. "The Link Program helped me mature," he says. "Before becoming involved in the program, I was basically a hoodlum. Now I'm more responsible and know how to live independently. I'd like to take what I've learned and raise my children a lot differently from how I was brought up." **VF**

If you would like to support young people like Robert Davidson as they age out of government care, contact Peter in Development and Donor Services at 604.629.5357. To learn more about Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative, go to vancouverfoundation.ca/yhi



The Harlem Nocturne – owned by trombonist Ernie King (pictured here and in inset, posing with dancers) and his wife, showgirl Marcella “Choo Choo” Williams – was Vancouver’s only black nightclub when it opened in 1957. (inset top, centre) Strathcona resident Barbara Howard, the fastest woman in the British Empire in 1938.



The fabulous – but largely forgotten – black history of Vancouver’s Strathcona neighbourhood



Some of the names almost everyone knows: Jimi Hendrix, Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole. Others might ring a few bells: Vie’s Chicken and Steakhouse, Marcella “Choo Choo” Williams, the Harlem Nocturne. Still others, like Barbara Howard, are virtually unknown. What they have in common is they’re all part of the fabulous – but largely forgotten – black history of Vancouver’s Strathcona neighbourhood.

“This is such a hidden history,” says Esther Rausenberg. “That’s why we really wanted to bring it to life.” As co-artistic director of the Creative Cultural Collaborations Society, Rausenberg, with the support of Vancouver Foundation and other funders, is working to revive memories of the black community’s presence through *Black Strathcona*, an interactive new media project. *Black Strathcona* will create 10 three-minute videos about the key locations and figures of Strathcona’s black community from the 1920s to the 1970s, when Vancouver’s black population was concentrated in that neighbourhood.

BY DOROTHY BARTOSZEWSKI
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ESTHER RAUSENBERG

Researched, written and filmed by well-known Vancouver writer Wayne Compton and award-winning filmmaker Gordon McLennan, the videos will mix rarely seen archival footage and photographs along with interviews with community members. In an interactive twist, commemorative markers will be posted in key locations around Strathcona, and people will be able to scan the QR code, or barcode, on the marker with their smartphone to watch the related video. The videos and a map of the marker locations will be available online.

One of the videos will tell the story of sprinter Barbara Howard’s rise to fame. Howard was only in Grade 11 at Vancouver’s Britannia High School when she was recognized as the fastest woman in the British Empire; she beat the British Empire Games’ sprinting record by a tenth of a second, running 100 yards in 11.2 seconds. That feat won her a spot on the Canadian team and a trip to the British Empire Games in Australia in 1938, where she “caused quite a stir,” according to the *Globe* sports columnist:

“She apparently was quite a novelty . . . appearing on the front page

subsequent death of Clarence Clemons, a black longshoreman.

Vie’s Chicken and Steak House served up a different kind of soul food. The best-known and longest-running of a series of Southern-style chicken joints in the neighbourhood, Vie’s was started by Viva Moore and her husband Robert in the late 1940s. The late-night diner, with its distinctive bright yellow and blue walls and deep-red ceiling, fed luminaries including Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole and Count Basie. And since Nora Hendrix worked there for years, her grandson Jimi was also a frequent patron.

“Vie’s obviously has to be one of the stories. And then, of course, there’s the Nocturne . . .” says Rausenberg. The Harlem Nocturne was Vancouver’s only black nightclub on Hastings Street, co-owned by showgirl Marcella “Choo Choo” Williams and her husband, trombonist and band leader Ernie King. The Nocturne offered burlesque acts including “Lottie the Body” and performers such as Ike Turner; it drew locals, American sailors in port and even regulars from Seattle.

No series of stories about black culture in Strathcona would be

Reviving Black Strathcona

of every newspaper. They seldom see coloured athletes down there . . . the photographers and autograph seekers kept on her trail.”

Howard won silver and bronze medals in relay events and came sixth in the 100-yard dash, but considered herself a failure for not bringing home a gold medal. She hoped to redeem herself at the upcoming Olympics, but the 1940 Olympic Games were cancelled due to the outbreak of the Second World War.

Howard is believed to be the first black woman to represent Canada on the international sports stage. Later, she also became the first visible minority hired as a teacher by the Vancouver School Board, where she taught for 43 years.

“People really aren’t aware of what she accomplished. And she’s still alive. She’s a real dynamo,” says Rausenberg. “She’s in her 90s, still in her own home, and still volunteering. She’s just an amazing woman.”

Another *Black Strathcona* story will focus on the Fountain Chapel, located at 823 Jackson Avenue from 1918 to 1985. Co-founded by Nora Hendrix, a former vaudeville dancer and grandmother to legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix, Fountain Chapel was a local chapter of the politically active African Methodist Episcopal Church. Considered the spiritual home of Vancouver’s black community, it was also where the community gathered to organize around issues such as the trial of Fred Deal, a railroad porter charged with murdering a Vancouver police constable, and the police beating and

complete without one about Hogan’s Alley, known for its illegal drinking establishments, brothels and gambling dens. According to one description, “There was nothing but parties in Hogan’s Alley – night-time, anytime, and Sundays all day. You could go by at six or seven o’clock in the morning, and you could hear jukeboxes going, you hear somebody hammering the piano, playing the guitar, or hear some fighting, or see some fighting, screams, and everybody carrying on.”

“Hogan’s Alley has become really symbolic for a lot of young people, but a lot of the black community were really upstanding citizens who saw Hogan’s Alley as nefarious and not a part of who they were. So we also want to balance that with other stories to give a full picture of what black Strathcona was like,” says Rausenberg.

Rausenberg is hoping to have the videos complete and markers in place by the end of 2013. “It’s going to be amazing, having people able to really get a sense of these people and places and times coming alive again through these videos. I can’t wait.” **VF**

For more information about the *Black Strathcona* project and the Creative Cultural Collaborations Society, go to blackstrathcona.ca. To support innovative cultural history projects like *Black Strathcona*, call Peter in Development and Donor Services at 604.629.5357, or visit our website at vancouverfoundation.ca/give



Charles Johnny (above) and Eagle Williams (here) helped plan and build a mountain bike park for their community.

BY DONNA BARKER | PHOTOS PAUL LUCAS

Building ramps and community

A new bike park for the Boothroyd Indian Band is teaching local kids to do much more than grinds and flips

It's 8:30 on a Saturday morning in July, just a few kilometres north of Boston Bar. The day is clear and promises to be a scorcher. In a dirt pit just a stone's throw from the Boothroyd Indian Band office, five men stand among shovels, saws, hammers, nails and a truckload of two-by-fours.

Patrick Lucas, one of the five BC Aboriginal Youth Mountain Bike Program volunteers, watches a child ride by on a path above them. The child disappears into the trees. Then another, and another. Lucas and his colleagues are concerned – not about the safety of these young riders – but that he and his fellow volunteers will be left to work alone in the sandpit, building a mountain bike park that the youth of the Boothroyd Indian Band have helped design.

"Next thing you know, there are a dozen kids riding around, circling us like sharks. And then they all swarmed down, a great ball of energy whipping around us, grabbing shovels, hammers, wood, saws," says Lucas. "These kids were unstoppable. They worked two full days and ran us ragged. They were just so happy to be building the bike park that they'd all contributed to envisioning for their community."

Jerome Campbell, age 12, attended every planning meeting, saying he "went for fun. To watch how the older people do it." The fact was that the "older people" needed young people like Jerome and his cousin Damon, who also attended the meetings, since this mountain bike park is for them, and much of its success lies in the kids being included in its design and construction.

"They showed us pictures of other parks and we told them what we wanted, like a pump track," says Jerome. "You can race your friends on it. It's fun. And it was fun to help build the park. There's a real reward in building what we helped think up."

Brandon Johnny (right centre), Bruce Williams (second from right) and Patrick Lucas (far right).



(left) Patrick Lucas (seated) gets a lesson in hammering from Evan Johnny; (above) Damon Campbell and Charles Johnny test the ramps in the new Boothroyd bike park.



In total, 38 people came out to dig and hammer (and cook four meals for the dirty diggers and hot hammerers) and to reap the rewards of being part of building this community mountain bike park.

On the surface, it may be hard to see why Vancouver Foundation would contribute \$15,000 to shape dirt piles and build jumps, a pump track and a wooden "learning" square in a community where kids can ride their bikes almost anywhere. But dig just a little and the true value of this repurposed dirt pit becomes crystal clear.

Doug Detwiller, founder of the non-profit organization Sprockids and a key volunteer with Lucas in designing and building this bike park, speaks from 20 years of experience using mountain biking to help young people develop skills, attitudes and interests that the school curriculum just isn't designed to deliver.

"Lots of kids think they have no power. The whole project in Boothroyd was empowering for the young people who got involved, from the initial design meetings to now using the park and choosing what features they'll ride. They may not realize it, but when they ride they're showing their power, self-control, the ability to do something that's not easy, and with that comes feelings of success. In the bike park or out on the trails, they can get dirty and shout and have fun – just be happy, active kids."

Looking forward, both Detwiller and Lucas are committed to continuing to work with the Boothroyd Indian Band to help spin out the next stages of the community's connection to mountain biking. In the short term, a series of mountain

bike trails will be developed in and around Boothroyd, providing more opportunities for both young people and adults to get outside, "whoop and holler" together and continue to develop a new passion for being outdoors.

Michael Campbell, a Band Council member, says, "We

have some old logging roads and walking trails that start just outside some of the houses in Boothroyd. People still use these trails for picking berries and mushrooms and for travelling to fishing spots. Our community has people trained in environmental monitoring so we're all working together, with people like Patrick Lucas and Doug Detwiller, to make sure the new bike trails we're planning don't disturb plants or mushrooms."

Lucas adds, "Mountain bikers are great partners for small First Nations communities because we share their traditional respect and stewardship for the land and we offer new, fun and challenging ways to engage with nature. It's hard to get young people outside, away from television and video games. The bike park, and the new trails we're planning, are getting more people – not just the kids – back out on the land."

Michael Campbell agrees and shares a vision of an even longer-term goal that starts in the new mountain bike park, and travels 53 kilometres northeast along a traditional trading route from the Mehatil River watershed northeast to the Stein Valley.

This new project will take years of planning and the engagement of more community members to make it a reality. But talking to young Jerome – who is now leading the research and proposal writing for a paintball park in Boothroyd – it's easy to see how being part of the bike park project has empowered him to take a leadership role in his community.

This project is proof that a small group of thoughtful, committed youth, with visionary mentors, can change the world – or at least a small part of it. More surprising is that a mountain bike park was the catalyst for this change – that while building ramps in Boston Bar, these youth were also building community. **VF**

If you would like to support this type of community building project, call Kristin in Development and Donor Services at 604.629.5186, or visit our website at vancouverfoundation.ca/give

New Money, Traditional Values



“I live to give, do good, thank God, and play golf”

BY PAUL HERATY | PHOTOS VINCENT L. CHAN

“Retired.” It’s definitely not a word you would use to describe Jack Gin – although it’s been more than five years since he drew a paycheque or drove to work.

“I guess I’m a really busy retiree,” he says with a wide grin.

In fact, Gin’s day is just as full of projects and meetings as before, but instead of working to earn money, now he’s working to give it away.

Gin was born and raised in east Vancouver, and has many fond memories of growing up in the ’60s and ’70s. He remembers catching tadpoles in the ponds on Terminal Avenue (now a parking lot for Home Depot) and playing soccer and street hockey ‘til dark.

At 10, he started working in the family business. “My father ran a Shop Easy grocery store. I remember delivering groceries to seniors and getting stuck in their apartment because they wanted someone to talk to. I’d get a 10-cent tip. One of the benefits of working then was learning to engage with other people.”

Gin went to John Oliver High School, then earned an engineering degree from UBC. He and his wife and children have lived in the same modest house in Burnaby for 26 years.

In 1997, Gin founded a technology company that specialized in security surveillance equipment. The business prospered globally and, after 11 years of long hours, hard work and endless travelling, he sold it to a large technology conglomerate.

Then Gin took some time off to rest, play a little golf, and plan what should happen next. One of the first things he and his family decided to do was give more to the community that they still call home.

“We thought about setting up our own family foundation to expand our giving,” says Gin. “But it takes a long time – about a year – to do that. Thankfully, we got connected with Vancouver Foundation.”

In the last five years, through a donor-advised fund they set up with Vancouver Foundation, the Gin family has supported dozens of charities. They regularly donate to Seeds of Hope Children’s Ministry, an international charity for orphaned children. Locally, the family supports the Neighbourhood Small Grants program out of South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, as well as various health care and educational institutions, and faith-based organizations that help people in poverty.

It took some time to get over the shock of selling my business,” says Gin. “But now I have a new mission statement. It’s my 4G rule: I live to give, do good, thank God, and play golf.”

Ever the engineer, Gin is also still hungry to create, to discover and to solve problems. He sits on the boards of several startup companies, and works with others consulting on international business development. One company is using pheromones to control pests instead of insecticide. Another is perfecting a low-energy, high-tech desalination process that uses solar and waste energy to produce potable water.

“Just imagine what that could do for some of the drought-stricken areas of the world!”

Talking about these projects, Gin gets so excited he almost vibrates. And his enthusiasm is infectious – anyone within hearing distance can’t help but be swept up in his excitement.

Harnessing enthusiasm like Gin’s is one of the challenges facing

non-profits these days. Jack Gin is “new” money. He is sharp, informed, and used to moving quickly in a rapidly shifting technological world. He also expects accountability, performance and results.

But useful metrics in the world of philanthropy are hard to come by. After all, measuring the success of a youth homelessness initiative is not the same as counting widgets rolling off a factory production line. Many of the charitable projects the Gin family supports could take years to show results.

Gin is especially proud of two particular projects they have supported, and not just because both can be measured for success. One is to build a small dam and irrigation system near Siem Reap in Cambodia. When completed, the dam will contain extreme-weather flooding that has destroyed crops and caused uncertainty for more than 20,000 residents. This is a project with a huge impact on a poor and vulnerable community.

The other project was much closer to home.

Two winters ago, a local TV station sponsored a “12 Days of Christmas” campaign. Children wrote in with their wishes for the season, and the TV station chose 12 that it would help to make happen.

One of the chosen wishes was from a student at Admiral Seymour Elementary School in east Vancouver. She asked for a new swing set for her school. There weren’t enough swings at the school to go around, so the kids had to line up and wait to play on them.

The TV station contacted Vancouver Foundation, and the Foundation in turn connected with two donors.

One of those donors was Jack Gin. When he found out that this young girl was a refugee from Africa, he knew he had to get involved.

“I was taken by her selflessness, and was happy to meet this young person. She lives in the same area where my great grandfather’s house once stood.

“I went to the cheque presentation,” says Gin. “But I couldn’t attend the official opening . . . You know, to this day I still don’t know who the other donor was.”

There weren’t many people at the official opening for the new swing set at Admiral Seymour Elementary that drizzly February day two years ago. But the rain didn’t dampen the children’s spirits. They squealed and swung on the new set; laughed and posed for the TV camera; swung; ran and twirled like dervishes; and swung some more.

Their smiles were matched by two people. One was Jack Gin, who, later that day, listened intently on his cellphone as Peter Jackman from Vancouver Foundation described the children’s reaction and the success of the event.

The other person was at the opening, a lone figure in dark fleece standing at a discreet distance, watching the children swing, hearing their squeals of unbridled joy, and beaming with delight. **VF**

If you would like to experience the joy of giving, whether anonymous or not, call Peter at Development and Donor Services at Vancouver Foundation at 604.629.5357, or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give

Old Money, New Ideas

A seven-year-old's birthday present in 1938 is one gift that keeps on giving

BY PAUL HERATY

At 82, Sheila Ross moves a bit more slowly now. But her wit, her sense of humour and her memory show no signs of slowing down. Some things she remembers as clearly as if they happened just yesterday. For instance, her seventh birthday – Ross remembers she wanted a bicycle. But her father had other ideas.

F.R. Graham was an important financier and industrialist in pre- and post-war BC, and the owner of Union Steamships. In the days before BC Ferries, his boats were one of the few links to the outside world for countless island and coastal communities. He was also the father of 13 children, of whom Sheila was the 10th.

Graham believed one was never too young to learn about business and to learn about giving back to the community. So for her seventh birthday, Ross received not a shiny new two-wheeler, but something “much better” – she got shares in Canadian Pacific Railway.

Graham showed considerable vision, if not sensitivity, in his choice of birthday gift. Youthful disappointment aside, those shares have appreciated considerably since 1938, and Sheila has used them for a variety of charitable donations.

In fact, she now uses shares and securities for all her donations. The Canada Revenue Agency provides an extra incentive to those who donate shares. By taking advantage of this, Ross has realized significant tax savings over other methods, such as writing a cheque. This strategy has enabled the family to give even more over the years.

Ross has been a donor with Vancouver Foundation only since 2009, but the family links go back much further. Her sister Anne started her own fund with Vancouver Foundation in 1996, now administered by Anne's children. Another sister, Jane, started her fund with the Foundation in 1983. And their father, F.R. Graham, was one of the “founding fathers” of the Foundation – 10 local business men who, in 1943, were so inspired by the example of one Alice Mackay (MacKay left \$1,000 in her will to help women in poverty) that they each donated \$10,000, to be overseen by a new



F.R. Graham, Sheila Ross's father, helped start Vancouver Foundation in 1943.

organization they called Vancouver Foundation.

That original collective donation of \$101,000 grew over time. Now, 70 years later, Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation, with assets of \$814 million. Donors like Sheila Ross are continuing that long family tradition of giving back to the community, honouring the vision of Alice MacKay and F.R. Graham.

“I think the Foundation is great. They look at the community and they see what the needs are,” says Ross. “I'm impressed by the Neighbourhood Small Grants program.”

Ross is an active woman. Four children and 12 grandchildren keep her and husband Bob busy. She plays bridge, golfs three times a week in the summer and does Pilates twice a week. She gives to literally dozens of charities – usually anonymously – under the cloak of a cleverly titled fund at Vancouver Foundation that doesn't identify her. And she is surprisingly high-tech in her philanthropy, tracking her donations using the Foundation's *My Philanthropy* website.



Sheila Ross (née Graham) holds a photo of nine of her 12 brothers and sisters from 1932 (Sheila is the babe in arms, second from right).

“You know, I've often wondered why people don't give to a charity in honour of someone, and do it while the person is still alive, rather than in their memory, so they can see the difference it makes.”

“My mail never comes without something in it,” she says. “Usually two or three big grant requests. I also get a lot of letters from people, and notes from friends on where I can spend money.”

“You know, I've often wondered why people don't give to a charity in honour of someone, and do it while the person is still alive, rather than in their memory, so they can see the difference it makes.”

“It's pretty hard to live in this world without giving back,” Ross muses. “I have everything I want. Travel isn't as appealing as it used to be. And I want to give back to the community.”

To do that, Sheila Ross seeks the advice of the experts at Vancouver Foundation. She uses their expertise and contacts in the community to find out where the greatest need lies. “They look after us very well.

I feel like our donations are being well used.

“Can I show you something?” she asks. She disappears into another room, and returns with some photos. “Look at these. This is something I like to do.”

She proffers a picture of a rainy schoolyard. Someone is being interviewed by a TV crew. It's obviously a miserable day, but there are children on a new swing set and they seem to be having fun.

“The Foundation sent this to me,” she explains, pointing out a figure in dark blue fleece and a toque hovering in the background of the photo. “Isn't that something? That's me!” she says with more than a hint of childish delight.

Ross smiles broadly. “That's what I like to do. It's funny you know – apparently there was another donor who helped with the swing set. I never did find out who it was.” **VF**

If you would like to learn more about how you can give back to your community, call Peter in Development and Donor Services at Vancouver Foundation at 604.629.5357, or visit our website at vancouverfoundation.ca/give. To learn more about donating securities, see page 31 of this issue.

The Whalley Women's Drop-in at the Surrey Urban Mission has become a high point of the week for founding volunteers Laura Krowchenko (left) and Linda Kompauer.



A Safe Place for Second Chances

The story of two women who built a community in the streets of Surrey

BY JEANETTE LEBLANC | PHOTOS CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO

January 2012: An idea is born

It's a dismal winter night. Linda Kompauer and Laura Krowchenko are taking friends home through Whalley, a densely populated community in Surrey. Kompauer is driving while Krowchenko navigates. They notice women standing out in the cold rain – streetwalkers.

“It would be a terrible night to be out working,” says Krowchenko. “We should do something for them. Like find out how much an hour costs and take them for coffee to get them out of the cold.” Kompauer agrees. But they don't return that night.

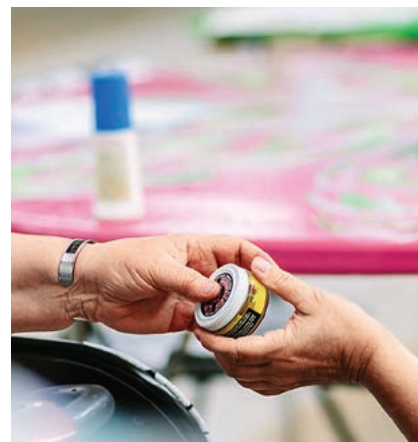
Both women are in their 60s and retired, with backgrounds in human resources and speech therapy, respectively. They are longtime friends, and enjoy reading, gardening and spending time with family and friends. They also enjoy helping others in need. If you spend any time with this warm duo, they will instantly make you feel at home with their generous hearts and approachable personalities.

After that cold night in January, several weeks passed and both women started to notice more news about the issue of sex-trade workers in BC. They learned about their vulnerability, and wanted to help. “We couldn't shake the idea [of] how awful it must be to

work in those conditions,” says Kompauer.

The duo approached the Surrey Urban Mission (SUM Place), where Kompauer is a volunteer, about what they could do. SUM Place offered the two some free space.

They then heard about the Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub in Surrey, a Vancouver Foundation Neighbourhood Small Grants program partner. The program provides small grants to local residents for ideas to help connect and engage their neighbours. The ladies applied for a grant to start a women's drop-in program and were awarded the largest grant possible – \$1,000.



(top left) Arriving at Surrey Urban Mission: For three hours each week, Krowchenko and Kompauer host a drop-in for women in Whalley, bringing food, crafts and compassion.

Their combined culinary and creative talents make them an ideal pair to put this grant money to good use for food and crafts.

“We just want to create a safe place for women,” says Kompauer. “We went out to the street in Whalley and Newton, brought the women some food, and started talking to them. At first they were nervous, but they were hungry too.”

May 2012: The grand opening

“We opened the doors on May 15 last year,” says Kompauer, “And the women who showed up were not the women we expected.” They were women in the area who were struggling – with poverty, with homelessness, with mental health issues and with addictions. Many were single mothers – some whose children had been apprehended, and some who had worked the street in the past.

The biggest realization for Kompauer and Krowchenko was the isolation in which so many of the women lived. “When the women first came, many didn’t make eye contact, and wouldn’t even take their coats off. They didn’t know what we wanted from them,” says Kompauer. But over the months that followed, the Whalley women gradually felt more comfortable participating, and some even started to arrive early, eager to begin.

And so, every Monday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Surrey Urban Mission, the Whalley Women’s Drop-In continues to attract a collection of women for food and companionship. Each week, the two women pack up their van with supplies, carpool from their homes about 40 minutes away, then unload and set up. At 7 p.m., they pack up, leaving leftover food with the women who have dropped in, and drive home. And they do it all again the next week.

May 2013: Something to celebrate

Kompauer and Krowchenko celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Whalley Women’s Drop-In. Looking back, Krowchenko says, “We had an average of 12 to 15 women drop in each week.”

Challenged by other agencies to have more of an established support program, both say the women aren’t coming for that.

“They come in and have a cup of coffee, a meal, and share how their week is going,” says Kompauer. “It’s simple, we eat together and we are present together, whatever they want to do each week. This is significant for them.”

Kompauer and Krowchenko are often shocked by some of the stories they hear. But there is no judgment at the drop-in.

“One woman came in after losing custody of her child,” says Kompauer. “She was so upset. She joined us for dinner and the other women didn’t know her story but reached out to her anyway.” Many friendships have been created and now some connect outside the drop-in.”

Carla Schmidt, a regular drop-in participant, says, “I like the companionship. It’s the most important. It’s such a valuable program. It’s a bonus for the community. I really think it could save lives.”

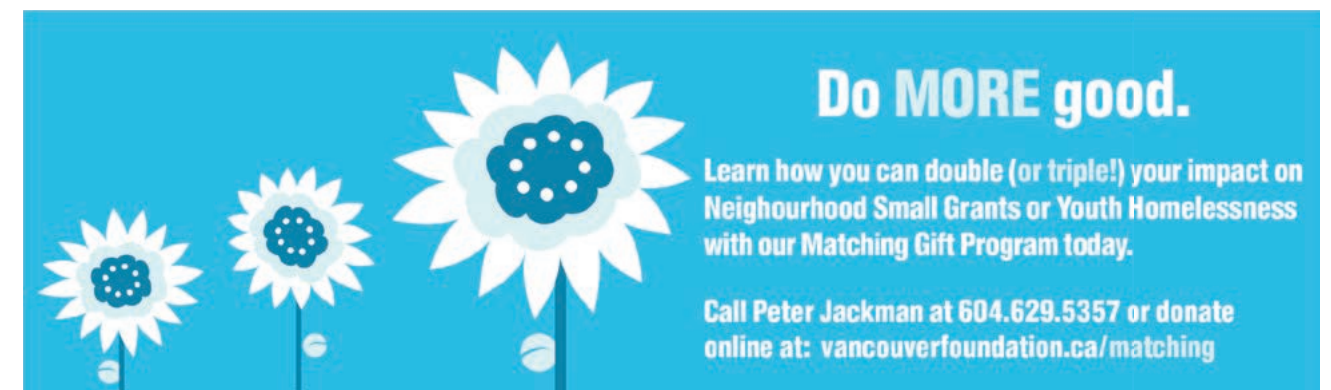
Life is school and love is the lesson

Kompauer feels that she and her friend have found their calling. “We never set out to do this. Twenty or 30 years ago, I never would have guessed I’d be here today. But we love the program, and really love these women. When they don’t come or we don’t come, we miss each other. It has become a high point of our week now.”

This year, they applied for and received another Neighbourhood Small Grant to continue their program – they even hope to expand in the future.

Both Kompauer and Krowchenko have learned a lot about the women in their own backyard. “They are no different than us,” says Kompauer. “They are someone’s daughter, sister, mother. We are all women . . . We’re not here to judge them. But we need to reach out to them. Everyone deserves a second chance.” **VF**

If you would like to contribute to the Whalley Women’s Drop-In, or learn more about other Neighbourhood Small Grants projects, visit vancouverfoundation.ca/NSG or contact Peter at Vancouver Foundation at 604.629.5357 to learn how you can support the program in your neighbourhood.





Hello, Grandma?

These two words could cost you your life savings BY PAUL HERATY

Actor Mickey Rooney, philanthropist Brooke Astor and an 87-year-old grandmother from Burnaby (let's call her "Barbara") share an embarrassing and expensive secret.

They are all elderly victims of financial abuse – Rooney and Astor by a family member, and Barbara by a complete stranger. Rooney's stepson allegedly took control of Rooney's money and forced him to live in poverty. Astor's son tried to take control of her immense fortune after she developed Alzheimer's disease. And Barbara lost her life savings in what is being called the "grandparents scam."

Barbara lives at a seniors' residence in Burnaby. Early in 2012, the residence was targeted by a group of scammers. They made a series of phone calls to the facility and, unfortunately, got through to Barbara.

They used what has become a well-known trick to get seniors to send money. They told her it was her "grandson" calling, that he was in Montreal and needed money desperately. He'd been arrested for drunk driving – but didn't want his parents to find out. Barbara, eager to help, quickly sent the cash he requested.

The calls kept coming. The "grandson" needed money for a lawyer, then car repairs, then more money to pay a fine. Each time, Barbara went to the nearby bank and withdrew money from her savings to send to her "grandson," believing that she was helping him. When she'd drained her savings account, her bank gave the elderly woman a line of credit, which she used to send even more money to the scammers.

She always withdrew a little bit at a time. Her family thinks the scammers told her to do it in small amounts so it wouldn't draw attention. By the time Barbara's son found out, his mother had sent more than \$20,000 to an obscure address in Toronto. On several occasions, the scammers even sent a UPS delivery person to Barbara's seniors' residence to pick up the cash.

Barbara's private pain, and Rooney and Astor's far more public troubles, are only three examples of a disturbing trend: financial abuse of elders is on the rise.

There are no reliable statistics on such scams in Canada. However, in the US, the annual financial loss by victims of elder financial abuse in 2010 was estimated to be at least \$3 billion, a 12 per cent increase from the \$2.6 billion estimated in 2008.*

Fake lotteries, fake charities, phishing, dating scams, miracle cures. There are so many types of fraud that Canada's Competition Bureau has produced *The Little Black Book of Scams*. It's filled with examples of how everyone, and especially seniors, can be tricked, swindled, duped, defrauded, faked and romanced out of their life savings. All this by an increasingly sophisticated and web-savvy group of criminals who prey on people's weaknesses and exploit their good will.

These scams have become increasingly common. In 2009, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recorded 743 incidences of scammers impersonating a family member or friend in need of money. Since 2010, the FTC has recorded more than 40,000 scams, and it's estimated that many more go unreported.

Everyone with an email account knows about the Nigerian banking scams that have been circulating the Internet for years. They seem almost laughable now. But for many seniors whose judgment may be compromised by age or disease, and whose experience on the web is limited, these scams still pose a real threat.

Martha Jane Lewis, executive director of the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS), says elder abuse is a huge problem and it's growing. "Statistics for Canada are almost non-existent. But we estimate that one per cent of seniors report experiencing some form of physical abuse, and eight per cent report experiencing financial abuse."

According to Lewis, the reason for this growth is two-fold. First, it's simple demography – the number of seniors is exploding. Second, seniors are living longer, and need to save more than ever before for their retirement. Even large pension funds are not prepared for the reality of people being retired for more than 40 years. Many baby boomers now facing retirement haven't saved like their parents. They have far less money and don't have a company pension plan to fall back on. As a society, we do not always recognize the sometimes desperate conditions this vulnerable population must endure.

Words to the wise

Help prevent elder abuse with these cautionary tips (and share them with any seniors you think could be at risk):

- Limit the personal information (e.g., vacation plans) you put on the Internet (scammers troll sites like Facebook to gather personal information).
- Be suspicious of anyone who calls unexpectedly asking for cash.
- Verify any supposed emergency by calling friends and family before wiring money.
- Create a secret code or password with family members that can be used to verify a true emergency.
- If an investment sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Say no when someone pressures you for money.
- Make sure you fully understand every document you sign.

A burgeoning senior population, many of whom grow more desperate as they face the reality of a long retirement, is particularly susceptible to risk-taking and scams that promise unreal financial returns – and why, for fraudsters, business is booming.

Since 1994, BCCEAS has worked to prevent elder abuse by providing education, support, advocacy and legal representation to older adults. Three lawyers and a legal advocate run a law clinic for marginalized and low-income older adults. BCCEAS also has a victim services program, and recently expanded the hours of operation for its Seniors Abuse and Information Line.

BCCEAS offers educational workshops for elders in four areas:

- 1) frauds and scams;
- 2) abuse around power of attorney and joint bank accounts;
- 3) building community connections; and
- 4) bullying in residential care.

With a recent Health and Social Development grant of \$36,500 from Vancouver Foundation, the Centre is

planning to expand these outreach efforts. BCCEAS will train five volunteers from each of 10 agencies (including MOSAIC, the South Granville Seniors Centre, the Minoru Seniors Centre, the Council of Seniors, Better at Home and United Way), delivering 50 educational workshops. These volunteers will then train others in their networks, and the knowledge will spread.

"We're here to help people," says Lewis. "Our goal is to get this important information out as widely as possible. We don't have the connections these other agencies have. We are here as a resource, supporting other agencies to become educated and to share the information in their own community."

"In the coming years, we must cope with an aging population, and all that entails. It's a massive challenge."

"We have to educate elders about their rights, and the harsh realities they may face. And we have to tell younger Canadians, 'Don't feel entitled to get your parents' money while they are still alive.' Power of attorney is not a legal instrument to spend your parents' money before they're dead." **VF**

**The MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse: Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders (June 2011)*

For more information, call the BCCEAS Seniors Abuse and Information Line at 604.437.1940 or toll-free at 1.866.437.1940 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. This is a safe place where older adults can get free, anonymous advice. Or, visit the website at bcceas.ca. To support this project, call the Foundation at 604.688.2204 or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give

The food desert of Vancouver's west side



FOOD DESERT FACTS

- 29% of female seniors in Vancouver live below the poverty line.
- 44% of all Vancouver seniors who rent cannot afford adequate and safe housing.
- Several west side neighbourhoods do not have a single grocery store.
- Walking is challenging for many seniors and transportation is expensive.



(Opposite page) South Granville locals line up to purchase fresh, affordable produce at the Westside Mobile Food Market; Maureen and Sheila head to the mobile market to load up on bananas, plums, peaches and zucchinis. (left) Annie Lambla, market co-ordinator, gets an early start on setting up for a busy day of sales with the help of local volunteers (right).



While South Granville is known for its designer shops, live theatre and award-winning restaurants, affordable produce can be hard to find

BY JEANETTE LEBLANC | PHOTOS VINCENT L. CHAN

Populated by many seniors, some of whom have been living in the area for decades, the South Granville area of Vancouver is known for its designer shops, live theatre and award-winning restaurants. Yet despite the many draws to this area, you'll be hard pressed to find affordable produce. South Granville – in fact, Vancouver's entire west side – is considered a “food desert.”

“I first came to this area in 1998,” says Elizabeth, a longtime resident of the west side. “Between 10th and 11th avenues on Granville Street, we had a baker who had been there since the '20s, a butcher, a green grocer, and across the street we had a little hardware shop. Then they were all taken out and replaced with designer shops.” After pausing to reflect, she asks, “What happened to us?”

Food deserts are areas where physical and financial barriers prevent some residents from accessing healthy food. Marcia, another west side senior, says, “The next grocery store within my budget is far away. If my arthritis flares up and I am feeling achy on a day I need to go shopping, I have to pop painkillers to be able to actually go.”

South Granville is just one area in Vancouver like this. If you view an aerial map of the city, you can see large swaths where there are no grocery stores at all for residents in the area.

The Westside Food Collaborative is working to address food

access issues for locals like Elizabeth and Marcia. Earlier this year, the group teamed up with the South Granville Seniors Centre to launch a pilot initiative – the Westside Mobile Food Market.

The first of its kind, the mobile market delivers fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables to seniors who would otherwise have a hard time accessing fresh produce. From July to September, the mobile market would set up each week at the South Granville Seniors Centre and then in Marpole Place Neighbourhood House.

The group initially organized community consultations to assess the specific needs of the west side by working with local advisors and residents. “I knew we had the power and energy to make this happen,” says Zsuzsi Fodor, community co-ordinator with the Westside Food Collaborative. “It's beyond what I could have imagined.”

For Fodor, who has a master's degree in urban food planning, the goals of this project are twofold. “We definitely want to meet the immediate food access and food security needs of the folks who are coming to the market. We also want to use it to tell the story of what's been going on in South Granville and other west side neighbourhoods to heighten the awareness, and challenge the perception that the west side is full of people who have means and don't need this kind of organizing.”

Through the Greenest City Fund – a partnership between Vancouver Foundation and the City of Vancouver – the Westside Mobile Food Market received \$12,000 in program support, and was able to leverage other, in-kind community support.

“With this support, Vancouver Foundation has allowed us to put food directly into a community that really needs it,” says Fodor.

The Westside Mobile Food Market aims to accommodate the needs of local seniors each week. This week, the market has a bounty of produce, from BC cherries and orchard peaches, to local garlic, fresh corn, new potatoes, green beans and more. Even before the market opened, more than a dozen local seniors were lined up.

Annie Lambla, Westside Mobile Food Market co-ordinator, manages the weekly operations of the market and hears firsthand what the locals think. “Everybody loves it,” she shares in between serving customers. But it can be a guessing game to know how much produce to bring. “We collect feedback on selection and price each week.”

As another customer buys corn, apples and plums, Lambla says, “The volunteers are a highlight for me. They're great to work with and it's good because they are residents of the neighbourhood too.”

The market's organizers and volunteers have all seen the

community come together around the market, and believe the market does more than sell vegetables. “It has the potential to help address isolation and loneliness in the community,” says Fodor. “The market is an outing for folks – they talk to the staff and other customers, and learn about other community events. These are unintentional positive benefits of the market . . . It's about food, but it's also about people.”

Raymonde Jabaji, a market volunteer and west side senior, agrees. “Some people who don't know about the seniors centre are now coming in,” Jabaji says. “The market is helping bring people together.”

The Westside Mobile Food Market is part of a campaign to support sustainable solutions that end food deserts in Vancouver's west side and give seniors easy, dignified access to affordable, healthy food. Learn more about the campaign at plentycampaign.ca **VF**

To learn more about Greenest City Community Grants, or to support projects like the Westside Mobile Food Market, contact Peter in Development and Donor Services at 604.629.5357. Or visit vancouverfoundation.ca/greenestcity.

FREE TO BE ME

Newcomer LGBTQ youth finds safe harbour and a welcoming community

BY ROBIN RUSSELL | PHOTOS TIFFANY COOPER



Azza Rojbi moved to Vancouver from Tunisia in 2010. She and her parents and two brothers left behind friends, careers and their extended family in search of a better life. Rojbi, in particular, had her own dreams of a new beginning and a new way of life – dreams she had not even shared with her own family. Rojbi is a lesbian. In Tunisia, she was forced to live in the closet, or face harsh punishment.

“People in Tunisia are super homophobic,” she explains. “You’ll see progress at all kinds of levels, but being queer* is super taboo. You can get jailed for up to three or four years if they find you kissing another woman or man. So everything is underground.”

Vancouver offered the promise of a new way of life. Twenty-year-old Rojbi wanted to make new friends, connect with a community, and explore what it is to be an openly proud, queer youth living for the first time without fear.

She found numerous programs that offered training, education and networking resources for newcomer youth. But she couldn’t find anything for the “double minority” of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, questioning) immigrant youth of colour.

Her search led her to QMUNITY, British Columbia’s queer resource centre. QMUNITY works to build a more inclusive future for the LGBTQ community free from discrimination. The centre offers education and training, advocacy work and community programming.

Rojbi was particularly excited about the prospect of attending youth drop-in sessions offering a casual, inclusive environment for any queer youth under 25.

On her first visit, looking around the crowded, multipurpose room at QMUNITY, she felt nervous and out of place. Most of the youth were Canadian-born – laughing and speaking English quickly and sticking with people they knew. The unfamiliar language and culture was overwhelming and Rojbi stopped attending the drop-in sessions. She wasn’t the only one.

The high dropout rate among queer immigrant youth wasn’t lost on QMUNITY’s youth workers, and they set out to uncover why. “We were responding to a need identified by the youth as this is an incredibly diverse community where some voices are more dominant than others,” says QMUNITY executive director Dara Parker. “We want to ensure all voices are included.”

QMUNITY’s research indicated that this group wanted a more inclusive, safe space for people like themselves. They wanted acceptance and understanding from their community. They wanted a voice, one that also connected back to their roots. This was the foundation for the Routes to Roots program.

In the fall of 2012, Vancouver Foundation’s Youth Philanthropy Council stepped up to the plate, providing \$10,000 for QMUNITY to establish Routes to Roots, a youth-led project for LGBTQ newcomers of colour dedicated to creating more inclusive spaces for the celebration of diverse identities.

In late 2012, Routes to Roots formed a committee of five queer immigrant youth. QMUNITY also sought a part-time project co-ordinator to lead the program – someone who possessed passion and commitment to the cause. Azza Rojbi was the right person for the job.

Over the course of the year-long program, Rojbi and the Routes to Roots group connected youth of all backgrounds, from Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America and China. They hosted social events and provided a forum to share stories and experiences.

Routes to Roots created training programs for organizations on how to better understand the specific needs of queer immigrant youth. QMUNITY already had robust education and engagement programs where businesses, corporations and the public sector could better understand, work with and serve the LGBTQ community. Routes to Roots added another layer, introducing organizations to the unique needs of queer workers who aren’t from Canada.

The most tangible and far-reaching outcome of Routes to Roots was the creation of a comprehensive, 26-page online resource guide for queer immigrant youth on how they can live, work and thrive in Vancouver. The guide directs youth to resources ranging from settlement services and language training, to sexual health and LGBTQ events, to employment and community resources.

Through all the planning, the events and the connections made over the year, one moment stands out for Rojbi. “One of my highlights was a Muslim family coming to one of our events to support their daughter.” She smiles as she recounts how she felt at the event.

“The whole goal of the event was to bring families and communities together. I was super excited at the first event to show support for all the people that came.” Being from a Muslim family herself, she saw that as a strong, symbolic gesture of the progress and acceptance that envelopes her life in Vancouver.

More work still needs to be done, but in one year Routes to Roots created resources, strengthened partnerships and built an inclusive community for young, new Canadians. The leadership, courage and passion of Rojbi and a dedicated group of youth created a voice that, until now, had not been heard. Young, queer, new Canadians can now be introduced to a city that offers tolerance and opportunity, rooted in a community that is truly diverse, and a safe space to finally be who they are. **VF**

**The word “queer” used to be a derogatory term for a homosexual male. The LGBTQ community has successfully reclaimed the term, and it has become a positive reference to any member of that community.*

Young, queer, new Canadians can now be introduced to a city that offers tolerance and opportunity, rooted in a community that is truly diverse, and a safe space to finally be who they are.

(bottom far left inset) QMUNITY executive director Dara Parker and Azza Rojbi discuss the year-long Routes to Roots project.

To support programs like QMUNITY’s Routes to Roots, or other projects funded by Vancouver Foundation’s Youth Philanthropy Council, visit vancouverfoundation.ca/give

Youth Vital Signs Survey

Taking the pulse of young people in metro Vancouver

BY MARTIN LIVINGSTON | PHOTOS JASON MYERS

Like many young people starting out, Rahul Walia is charting his career course. The 20-year-old Vancouver resident, who is studying life sciences at the University of British Columbia, is hoping for a career in medicine. But until he's licensed to take a patient's pulse, he's taking the pulse of metro Vancouver as a member of the Youth Leadership Council's Youth Vital Signs project.

In November 2013, Vancouver Foundation will release the results of its Youth Vital Signs (YVS) survey – a comprehensive report on 15- to 24-year-olds' perspectives on important social issues facing metro Vancouver. The survey is a report card in which young people evaluate their experiences of life in metro Vancouver in 13 categories: the arts; the environment; poverty; homelessness; safety; employment; education; transportation; culture, identity and belonging; physical health; mental health; youth voice; and youth spaces.

The survey and report was developed by members of Vancouver Foundation's Youth Leadership Council, a volunteer committee of 19 young people dedicated to making metro Vancouver communities better places for young people.

Victor Wakarchuk, 18, a youth worker at Richmond Youth Service Agency and UBC student, joined the Leadership Council last April. "The comprehensiveness of the Youth Vital Signs project makes it unique," he says. "There are lots of research projects that focus on one specific issue, but there are none that address a broad scope of issues in metro Vancouver from a youth perspective."

Wakarchuk and other volunteers on the council have spent the last eight months working on every aspect of the survey, from designing the questionnaire and surveying youth at local high schools, community centres and libraries, to gathering data, analyzing the results and writing the final Youth Vital Signs report.

"Participatory action research, where the people actually conducting the study are representative of the population surveyed, is always more effective than an outsider coming into a community to evaluate their needs," says Wakarchuk.

"We're so used to seeing research conducted by adults that really isn't representative of our views," concurs Walia. "This type of research resonates better with youth when it comes from their peers."

"Youth Vital Signs is important because it empowers young people," he adds. "There aren't many outlets in metro Vancouver for youth to voice their opinions on social issues. It's important for youth to make their views known, because those opinions matter."

After the YVS report is issued, both Walia and Wakarchuk want to see changes at the municipal level in the form of improvements to



(clockwise from top) June Liu; Andy Lin; members of the Youth Vital Signs Youth Leadership Council.

existing social programs, implementation of new policies and expanded program funding.

"We want policy makers, teachers and researchers to read this report, listen to what youth have to say and bring about some positive changes in metro Vancouver that address the needs of young people," says Walia.

Even before the YVS report is released, the experience of gathering the data and writing the report has had a profound impact on the lives of Walia and Wakarchuk.

"It's definitely made me more passionate about youth engagement," says Walia. "I've learned that a dedicated group of individuals can make a big difference in the community."

"It's changed my career path," adds Wakarchuk. "I'm much more inclined now to pursue a career where I can make a difference at the community level. I never really thought it was possible that a group this small could address all the problems of metro Vancouver until now, and that's really changed my perspective on the future." **VF**

Ask an Advisor

Sharing your donation

Why it's better to donate securities than cash

BY IAN ROBERTSON, CFA, MBA, MA

VICE PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR, PORTFOLIO MANAGER, ODLUM BROWN LIMITED

Canada has long provided generous tax incentives for Canadians who donate to charitable organizations by means of a two-tiered tax credit. Since 2006, an additional incentive has allowed Canadians to donate publicly traded securities with unrealized gains – producing significant tax benefits for donating shares, instead of cash, to a registered charity.

The basics

On the first \$200 of charitable donations claimed in a year, a BC taxpayer receives a tax credit of 20 per cent, or \$40. The credit on donations in excess of \$200 is worth 43.7 per cent. For example, a \$5,000 donation would result in a tax credit worth \$2,138 [(\$200 x 20 per cent) + (\$4,800 x 43.7 per cent)]. The maximum donation amount that can be claimed for a tax credit in a given year is 75 per cent of your net income, but any donations not claimed in the year they are made can be claimed in any of the following five years. The annual limit for donations that can be claimed in the year of your death or the year preceding your death is 100 per cent of your net income.

Publicly traded securities

In addition to the tax credit you'll receive based on the current value of the shares or other securities donated, as of 2006, any capital gains on dona-

		Sell Shares & Donate Cash	Donate Shares Directly
A	Value of Donation	\$5,000	\$5,000
	Original Cost of Shares	(\$3,000)	(\$3,000)
	Capital Gain		
	Taxable Capital Gain (50% or NIL)	\$2,000	\$2,000
		1,000	—
B	Income Tax @ 43.7% (Before Credit)	437	—
C	Donation Tax Credit (\$200 x 20.06%) + (\$4,800 x 43.7%)	2,138	2,138
A+B+C	Economic Cost of Donation to You	\$3,299	\$2,862

tions of publicly traded securities to a registered charity are not taxable.

For example, suppose you purchased shares of XYZ Co. for \$3,000, and they are now worth \$5,000. If you sell the shares and donate the proceeds to charity, you can expect to pay \$437 in capital gains taxes (assuming a marginal tax rate of 43.7 per cent).

However, since you would receive a tax credit of \$2,138 on your \$5,000 donation, the total cost to you would be \$3,299 (see table). On the other hand, if you choose to donate the shares directly to a charity, you would not only receive a tax credit of \$2,138, as stated above, but you would also save the \$437 in capital gains taxes. In this scenario, the total cost of your \$5,000 donation would be just \$2,862 (see table).

To learn more about tax incentives for donations to registered charitable organizations, or for more information about the products and services offered by Odlum Brown Limited, contact Ian Robertson at Odlum Brown Limited at 604.844.5424. **VF**

The information contained in this article is for general information purposes only, and is not intended to provide financial, legal, accounting or tax advice. You should consult directly with your financial advisor before acting on any matter discussed. Source: October 2012 OB Report by Michael Erez, Financial and Tax Planner with Odlum Brown Financial Services Limited, a subsidiary of Odlum Brown Limited.

In Memoriam

In 2012, we were honoured to receive posthumous gifts from individuals who made Vancouver Foundation a beneficiary in their Will, RRIF/RRSP or life insurance policy. We're proud to perpetuate the legacies of the following:

H. Keith & Edith Ralston ∞ Joan A. Miki ∞ Margaret Jean Ford ∞ Thomas Rust ∞ Robert Kenny ∞ Judith Jardine ∞ Carol Chapman & Robert Gillies ∞ Shirley Wong ∞ Ann Angus ∞ Hazel Southard ∞ Monica Wheatley ∞ Maribeth Jeanne Sinclair ∞ Ruth Hamilton ∞ Daniel Walsh ∞ Andreas Nord ∞ Wally & Betty Spence ...and two donors who wish to remain anonymous.



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