

Fall 2010

vancouverfoundation

stories of modern philanthropy



BEAUTY NIGHT

Downtown Eastside makeovers

MOVED TO MOVE

Visually impaired kids learn to play

BLACK BOOK SESSIONS

The writing's on the wall

LONGWORTH LEGACY

Tribute to a teacher

www.vancouverfoundation.ca

When you read this expanded issue of our magazine, you will see, as usual, some wonderful stories about projects that have been funded by Vancouver Foundation and our donors.

There are stories about keeping visually impaired children physically active, about a project that's helping women in the Downtown Eastside feel beautiful, about helping seniors in crisis and much more. These are the kind of projects Vancouver Foundation donors have been funding for more than 65 years. We've been doing this work for a long time; usually quietly and in the background. But this is starting to change. More and more people have heard the name Vancouver Foundation. However, all too often we still hear the question, "What do you do at Vancouver Foundation?" We'd like to answer this very fundamental, and very important, question right now:

Vancouver Foundation works to build stronger and more vibrant communities. We do this by linking people in our community with causes and projects that are making a difference.

And since our focus is community, the causes and projects we fund cover a broad spectrum; from arts and culture, education and environment to children and youth, housing and social needs.

Each year, we help our donors target their philanthropy by introducing them to hundreds of innovative projects in B.C. that are seeking financial support. These are solid initiatives (we screen them first) that really are making a difference in our communities. These are projects our donors might never otherwise hear about.

In this magazine, you'll read about some of the projects we supported in the past year or two. We feel this is the best way to help people understand what we do at Vancouver Foundation, and to help demonstrate the impact of philanthropy: by showing you the results.



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President and CEO
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Fall 2010
Volume 3 Number 2



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CO-ORDINATING EDITOR Kirsten Rodenhizer
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Dorothy Bartoszewski, Sondi Bruner, Kimberley Fehr, Faye Wightman
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Claudette Carracedo, Aaron Chung, Tiffany Brown Cooper, Kristina Copeland, Paul Heraty, Jaime Kowal, the Longworth family, Sheena Staples
SENIOR IMAGING TECHNICIAN Debbie Lynn Craig
ELECTRONIC IMAGING Laura Michaels
ASSISTANT STUDIO MANAGER Mandy Lau
Editorial email: info@vancouverfoundation.ca
www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Editorial v-mail: 604-688-2204
VF magazine is published twice a year by Vancouver Foundation (Suite 1200 – 555 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 4N6).



CHAIRMAN, CEO Peter Legge, O.B.C., LL.D (HON)
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Vancouver Foundation magazine is produced by Canada Wide Media Limited for Vancouver Foundation. Send change of address notices and undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 1200 – 555 West Hastings St., Vancouver, BC V6B 4N6, Box 12132, Harbour Centre. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40065475.
Advertising Policy: Vancouver Foundation will not be responsible for the claims of, nor does it provide endorsement for, the advertisers, products or services advertised in Vancouver Foundation magazine.

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Musical mash-up



Kokoro Dance and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra – joining forces once more – will premiere their anxiously awaited new production at the 2011 Vancouver International Dance Festival March 18-19. The project builds on three previous collaborations, though the first meeting, in 2004, between the small dance company specializing in *butoh* – a form of Japanese dance/performance art – and the classical orchestra was purely accidental; the result of a double booking on the same weekend at the Roundhouse Theatre. By the time the error was discovered, both shows had already been advertised. Rather than cancel, the two companies chose to work together, inaugurating a successful and continuing collaboration.

"With each encounter, we and the VSO learn more about the limitless possibilities of collaboration," says Kokoro's Jay Hirabayashi. "That this series started accidentally makes these performances all the more special. There is a lesson there in turning misfortune into fortune."

Butoh is characterized by slow, controlled motions performed in non-traditional environments by dancers in white body makeup. In this new production, seven dancers will perform choreography by Hirabayashi and Barbara Bourget to existing works by composers Michael Hynes and Joseph Schwanter, as well as to a new composition by VSO composer-in-residence Scott Good.

Vancouver Foundation and its donors granted \$24,000 to the project.

Learning close to home



There are five elementary schools in widespread School District #27, Cariboo-Chilcotin, but the students, most of whom are rural First Nations, must move to an urban centre to attend high school, away from family

and friends. This isolation has led to increased dropouts, depression and substance abuse. However, a new initiative is bringing education closer to home: an online curriculum for remote learners that aims to strengthen the quality of the educational experience for students and give them the skills to excel in a technological society. The initiative will also expand service to federal band schools and remote adult students. **Vancouver Foundation** donors supported this project with a grant of \$180,000.

Richmond under covers

To fill an unmet need in the community, Family Services of Greater Vancouver Richmond plans to develop and operate a 10-bed emergency shelter for homeless women and their dependent children in the city. This will be the first such shelter in Richmond, providing a variety of services, including an outreach worker/housing advocate who will help residents find and maintain housing. **Vancouver Foundation** donors gave \$68,200 to the project.



Symphony central



More and more music students are muttering "*presto, presto*" under their breath these days.

They're eagerly waiting as Wall Financial finishes building a new 46-storey residential tower on Seymour Street, at the former site of the Capitol 6 movie theatre. The first four floors will house the brand new Vancouver Symphony Centre and VSO School of Music.

Scheduled to open in January 2011, the 25,000-square-foot centre and school is a purpose-built space for music instruction. It will be home to a 120-seat recital hall, 18 teaching studios, 10 listening stations, six practice rooms, two classrooms, an ensemble room, a recording booth and other facilities. Distance learning capabilities have also been incorporated into the design.

Vancouver Foundation and its donors gave \$100,000 to the project.

Timberrr!

Good Timber is a musical revue inspired by the poetry of Robert E. Swanson, who worked for years as a logger, then as a forestry safety inspector for the government. His books *Whistle Punks & Widow-Makers* and *Rhymes of a Western Logger* are tales from the golden age of logging in B.C. The Other Guys Theatre Company brought together actors, musicians and visual artists to develop Swanson's work into a series of songs and dramatic readings. The show will be performed in Victoria against a backdrop of unique and rarely seen archival film and photography from the Royal B.C. Museum archives. **Vancouver Foundation** donors gave \$30,000 to the project.



Here are a few of the projects Vancouver Foundation and its donors recently supported.



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Seashore-Ed

Every September, thousands of volunteers gather in communities across Canada to clean up long stretches of the country's shoreline. Teachers have long been asking for a way to bring the shoreline cleanup – with its elements of science, geography, civics and other subjects – into the classroom. Thanks to a grant of \$9,000 from **Vancouver Foundation** donors, this project will create a school curriculum based on the project.



Carving on the edge

This year the Pacific Rim Arts Society launched Carving on the Edge, a new festival celebrating traditional and contemporary West Coast carving. The event, September 16-23, featured exhibits of West Coast carving, demonstrations, studio tours, lectures, films and community feasts in Ucluelet and Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The goal was to showcase the rich cultural history of the region, with contemporary explorations of carving, exhibitions and demonstrations of canoe building, traditional tools, masks, bowls, chainsaw arts, architectural features and new art forms. **Vancouver Foundation** and its donors gave \$7,000 to the project.



Mentors for moms

The Victoria Single Parent Resource Centre Society's Moms and Mentors Program provides mentoring for at-risk, isolated pregnant or parenting teens and vulnerable single mothers in Greater Victoria. Moms are matched for a year with volunteer mentors – experienced mothers who understand the challenges of being a single parent and can provide support in a nurturing, resourceful and non-judgmental manner. Monthly group activities with on-site child care offer educational and networking opportunities. The goal is to foster healthy pregnancies and strengthen parenting and coping skills. **Vancouver Foundation** gave \$29,000 to the project.



Snuneymuxw House of Learning

In September 2006, with more than half of Vancouver Island's Snuneymuxw First Nation facing unemployment, the band conducted a community literacy survey among its members. The result: 64 per cent of adults were reading at or below a Grade 7 level. To address the issue, the Snuneymuxw created the House of Learning, where Vancouver Island University instructors teach about 25 adult students over three semesters. Day classes are held for students up to a Grade 10 level, and evening classes for students at the Grade 11 and 12 level. By breaking down some of the social and psychological barriers to going back to school, the House of Learning project creates a bridge to higher education, in a respectful and supportive environment. **Vancouver Foundation** donors gave \$40,000 to the project.



Did you know?
Vancouver Foundation has
two granting cycles
for 2011

Vancouver Foundation is
accepting applications for
two granting cycles in 2011.
For details and application
deadlines, visit:
www.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants

Sound move

Deaf and hard-of-hearing babies and toddlers in remote and under-served B.C. communities are getting unprecedented access to the latest in hearing technology and therapy, thanks to some innovative programming at the Children's Hearing and Speech Centre of B.C. The Tele-Intervention and Tele-Education programs use distance technology to bring hearing assessment, listening and spoken-language therapy and education services to children and families regardless of where they live. And it's free for children under three.

Assistive-hearing technologies like cochlear implants can provide deaf children with an opportunity to participate fully in a hearing world. But early intervention therapy is essential to ensuring children develop listening and speech skills to their maximum potential. **Vancouver Foundation** donors gave \$16,500 to the project.

To find out more about any of these projects, or to make a donation, call 604-688-2204.



On the road to vitality

See Vancouver Foundation's report on life in our region.
Where are we moving forward? Where are the roadblocks?
Join the discussion.

www.vancouverfoundation.ca/vitalsigns

Measures of Success

| BY FAYE WIGHTMAN, CEO, VANCOUVER FOUNDATION

Not everything that counts can be counted

There is a long-standing debate in philanthropy about measuring success and measuring impact. On the one hand, there is a recent trend toward thinking about the act of giving as a “return on investment” decision. A belief that the same rigour should be applied to charities and non-profits as is applied to those companies that manufacture widgets.

This push to apply business models to philanthropic decisions – to measure success, to try to understand and quantify the impact of a charitable gift – is completely understandable. Many donors have made their money in business. These donors expect results. They want to see the impact of their gift now, not later. They are looking for accountability. They want evidence of success. They want metrics.

And for some charitable projects this is eminently doable. In fact, gauging the effectiveness of some programs is deceptively simple. It’s easy to know how many children in Africa were

How do you measure the success of programs whose benefits will take weeks, months or even years to fully realize?

inoculated by a particular program; or how many mosquito nets were distributed to protect against malaria; how many people were fed; how many homeless children were housed.

On the other hand, the impact of some types of philanthropy is much harder to measure. But the benefits, though more abstract, are no less real.

For example, Vancouver Foundation funds a program called Neighbourhood Small Grants. Last year, two residents of one of Vancouver’s poorer neighbourhoods observed local children kicking rocks in a field because they had no decent soccer balls to play with. These two residents got a Neighbourhood Small Grant from us and – for the “colossal” sum of \$400 – bought a bunch of soccer balls and basketballs to give away to local kids.

There was no detailed cost-benefit analysis, no follow-up to gauge the impact of this money. But if you measured success by simple enthusiasm, then this program was an overwhelming hit.

We’ve heard that one ball can keep 20 kids off the street. So, the benefits to these children should keep accruing – they are likely to stay physically active, and thus healthier. They are occupied, and therefore less likely to get street-involved. These are potentially

huge impacts, but they’re hard to quantify and may take a long time to realize – all this from a simple gift of a ball.

How do you measure the success of programs whose benefits will take weeks, months or even years to fully realize? How do you measure the value of funding a program where seniors learn skills to counsel their peers in dealing with grief, isolation or aging? Or where at-risk youth learn skills that could give them a new trade, and a new future?

The Man in the Moon program at Vancouver Public Library is a wonderful project that teaches male caregivers how to play games with and read to their young children. It encourages bonding between parent and child, and literacy skills in children.

The payoff of this program may be 20 years down the line, when (the research shows) those toddlers will probably grow up to be compassionate, more literate, better educated and more well-adjusted, and earn more than those infants who did not have exposure to such literacy programs. And the fathers will have better relationships with their children.

The efforts to find a common standard – the holy grail of metrics – have had mixed results. Here are two reasons why:

A wide spectrum of projects: At Vancouver Foundation we recognize that communities are complex, and that many factors go into creating a healthy and vibrant place to live. As a result, we fund a wide variety of projects in areas ranging from arts and culture to education, environment, animal welfare, children, youth and families, health and medical research and homelessness – hundreds of projects, each with its own unique objectives.

Some seek to house the homeless; others, to educate or entertain. Trying to find a single template that will effectively measure the success of funding both a new mainstage opera and a home-work club for at-risk youth in Burnaby is a huge challenge.

Varying timelines for ROI: Charitable organizations operate on timelines that vary from immediate to very long term. For some, success means having enough food for anyone who needs a meal. For others, it is years of medical research that may or may not lead to a cure for a disease. That’s why it’s not always easy to apply pure metrics and measure the return on investment.

Supporters of metrics also often miss an important point – philanthropy has a real benefit to the donor that is just as difficult to measure. How do you quantify the joy and satisfaction people get from knowing they have contributed to the solution of a problem, or that they may have helped one, or five, or a dozen lives? The smiles on the faces of the two residents who gave away the soccer balls in East Vancouver were just as broad as the smiles of the children who received them.

What I have learned from three decades in the philanthropic sector is that not everything can be measured. As Albert Einstein said more than 50 years ago: “Not everything that can be counted, counts. And not everything that counts can be counted.” **VF**





Again! Three-year-old Alethea plays on a slide in a neighbourhood park. The B.C. Blind Sports and Recreation Association helped the toddler's family develop her physical abilities.

Alethea's a lucky girl. The petite three-year-old clammers up the metal steps, then gleefully launches herself down the slide.

That might seem ordinary enough. But Alethea is blind, and many kids like her don't know the simple joy of movement. That's because physical activity – even sliding down a slide – isn't easy for kids who are visually impaired.

Vision gives kids reasons to move, whether they're reaching for a dangling mobile, crawling toward an intriguing toy, or mimicking big kids playing hopscotch. It also literally provides the “big picture” that helps kids assess situations from a distance and determine whether they are safe.

Kids with less vision tend to move less from the time they are infants, so their physical skills lag behind their fully sighted peers. As a result, they often miss out on everything from playground antics to the camaraderie and challenge of organized sports.

That's really too bad, because while everybody benefits from physical activity, it's even more important for kids who are visually impaired. Even basic daily activities such as walking and eating take more energy and co-ordination for

Moved to move

Kick-starting physical activity for visually impaired kids

BY DOROTHY BARTOSZEWSKI | PHOTOS CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO

In the time it takes you to realize a blind three-year-old can ride a bike, Alethea has left you in the dust.

them. They also tend to have fewer opportunities for stress release and socializing. For kids with impaired vision, physical activity makes their daily routines easier and is a venue for peer interaction and developing friendships. It also opens doors to recreational experiences – everything from skiing to snorkelling – that sighted kids often take for granted.

Fortunately, little Alethea is not likely to be left out of anything her sighted peers are doing. Alethea's mom, Winnie, watches with obvious pleasure as her daughter takes another exhilarating run down the slide.

"We have so much fun!" Winnie says. "She just loves being active. She loves water, so swimming is a huge one. When she was two I took her to do parent-tot gymnastics and she just loved that. There are so many benefits It helps her sleep well. Every time she does something new physically, or achieves something new like climb up a new ladder or whatever it might be, she's excited. She wants to do more of it and she's more confident.

And it's important that she knows what things like skip, hop and run are, so that she can participate fully with her peers at daycare, and later on, at elementary school." Winnie confides that Alethea already knows her "left" and "right," actually putting her ahead of many of her sighted peers.

But when Alethea was born, her mother had no idea what was physically possible for her child. "I was relieved to know there was help out there and there were people out there to help us, because I didn't know what to do," says Winnie.

Groups like the B.C. Blind Sports and Recreation Association showed Winnie how to cultivate Alethea's physical skills.

"Meeting the people at B.C. Blind Sports was really good. They gave us a lot of good information We played a lot of physical games with her, like tickling her on her feet, her legs, her stomach; carrying her in different positions," Winnie explains. "When Alethea was maybe three to nine months old, we would attach socks and wrist bands with bells on them, so whenever she moved or kicked her feet she would hear the bells Now we do a lot of talking through her environment, describing to her what it is that she's actually touching or experiencing or doing. It's all had a huge impact."

Alethea's physical confidence illustrates the value of developing physical skills as early as possible. That's why Vancouver Foundation helped to fund a DVD and written guide showing



parents how to encourage physical activity in preschoolers who are visually impaired.

"It's really groundbreaking material," says Jane Blaine, executive director of B.C. Blind Sports, which is producing the guide. "While it's never too late to benefit from being more physically active, the earlier kids start moving, the more opportunities they'll be able to take advantage of. We haven't seen this kind of help offered to parents anywhere else. The resource will make important information available to parents across B.C., and, through our website, to parents across the globe."

The guide, *Encouraging Physical Activity for Preschoolers with Visual Impairment*, offers ideas such as how caregivers can use sound, touch, smell and taste to entice their children to move, how to teach basic skills such as walking, climbing, throwing and catching, and how to prepare a child for physical activities at school or daycare. It also includes interviews with parents who have gone through the process of facilitating the physical abilities of children who are visually impaired.

As one of those parents, Winnie has no doubt that investing early in her daughter's physical abilities has already paid off handsomely. "It takes a bit of an extra effort but I think it is so important," she says.

From the smile on Alethea's beaming face as she lands, one more time, at the foot of her slide, it's obvious she agrees wholeheartedly. **VF**

For more information, visit www.bcblindsports.bc.ca
To support programs like this one, contact **Vancouver Foundation's Donor Services** at 604-688-2204.

The Black Book Sessions

The writing is on the wall for Vancouver taggers

| STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL HERATY



Alleys are the back end of urban life. Unlike the shiny, clean-scrubbed storefronts they serve, alleys are places rubbed raw by delivery and transport: goods in and garbage out. They're full of wires, poles and mysterious containers; the sounds of exhaust fans and dripping water – the haunts of wild-eyed binners and home to all manner of unsavoury activity.

At 14, Seva Mitrofanov, a graffiti writer, is a connoisseur of alleys. Five minutes with him and you'll never look at these narrow thoroughfares the same way again. For Seva, an alley is a blank canvas, full of electrical boxes to be stickered or tagged, poles just begging to be "bombed" and pristine walls waiting to be painted. Instead of a bunch of stacked barrels and a dented container, Seva sees stepping stones to a wall up high. That power pole next to the building? It's a virtual ladder to the rooftops.

"I can show you a million ways to get up on the roof," Seva says calmly, shaking his shoulder-length hair from his face, his somber expression breaking into a grin.

A year ago, he would have been up there, spray can in hand. For years he was part of a hidden society – a group that operates in alleyways; that has its own language and arcane rules – heroes, even. A group whose impact is seen only when the sun comes up.

Seva started tagging at 11. He sprayed his signature line, or "tag," over much of Kerrisdale and Kitsilano. On weekends, he would be up till the early hours walking the streets, looking for places to make his mark.

Eleven is younger than most involved in Vancouver's graffiti subculture. The average "writer" is male, 16 to 34 years of age, and – surprisingly – probably lives on the West Side, with his parents. He has few role models and his parents usually have no idea he's into graffiti. Often he also has few friends, and no specific interests or hobbies – at least until he gets involved in graffiti.

Seva points to his first tag, on a hydro box, in an alley behind 41st in Kerrisdale. "Way back then," he says, his tag was "hoodie."

"You can just see the outline of the 'H' and the 'O' here," he says. "Twenty-four-seven, I always carried something I could tag with – markers, paint. It was all about the next piece, and coming up with concepts."

During this impromptu tour, Seva is surprisingly literate about graffiti. "Most people think graffiti is all about vandalism, or it's all about art. Graffiti is culture, art and vandalism. It's all three, and I would get a sense of accomplishment from expressing that culture."

A little over a year ago, Seva was caught expressing that culture in his high school. He was given an option to do community service and enrol in a program called RestART, and he might not get charged.

Seva hasn't touched a can of Krylon in almost a year – at least for illegal painting – and props go to Kristina Copeland and the Black Book Sessions for that. Copeland is mural program co-ordinator with the province's Great Beginnings Program, and before it fell victim to cost cutting, she worked with staff from the City's Graffiti



PHOTO: Kristina Copeland

Vancouver is home to many stunning legal murals painted by professional artists and amateurs. For more information and a glossary of graffiti terms, visit: www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Management Program. She's been helping Vancouver graffiti writers kick the habit for about six years. One of the keys to her success is the Black Book Sessions, a program she helped start at Kitsilano Community Centre.

Copeland's words are as direct and as steely as her gaze: "Graffiti isn't art. If you don't have permission, it's vandalism. And it's often a gateway to other illegal activity."

For the novice writer, the process starts innocently enough, probably with just a couple of tags. Small stuff like fences and mailboxes. It's kinda cool, seeing his name out there. Then it progresses – to more tags, bombing and eventually bigger projects. These require more time and more paint. So he stays up later, cruising locations, often "throwing up" till 4 or 5 a.m. – it's an adventure. Soon he needs more money for supplies, so he starts racking paint, or maybe dealing to pay for it. He finds other writers doing the same thing. He joins a crew and suddenly he's got friends. Next he might start creating "pieces." He's getting "up." And for the first time he has goals – he wants to go "all city."

No wonder graffiti's addictive. It gives him almost everything he lacks: self-esteem, a social network, goals, adventure and a nightly rush of adrenaline. It takes a strong personality and a strong program – like the Black Book Sessions – to get writers to give that up.

"Black booking" is when graffiti writers get together socially. They drink, smoke, draw and plan their projects, often sketching them out in little black books that are jealously guarded. "We turned that notion [of black booking] on its head," says Copeland. "Our Black Book Sessions are month-long workshops where graffiti writers get together and learn to apply their energy and talents to legal activities – something they can be proud to put their name on."

At the Kitsilano Community Centre, a group of about a dozen young people are drawing. A local artist is discussing shadow and light, passing on tips. There's food, laughter, the buzz of learning new skills and sharing info. The sessions are a joint project between the VPD, Kitsilano Community Centre and Copeland. They're free, but the program is run on a shoestring. They have no funding except for a \$5,000 grant from

Vancouver Foundation donors, for which they say they are exceedingly grateful.

Twelve to 15 youth meet once a week for a month. With help from a facilitator and an artist/mentor, they develop their artistic skills and are introduced to related trades and potential business opportunities. They learn silk-screening and other techniques. Grads of the program have done logos for community centre tournaments and had their work emblazoned on T-shirts, snowboards, skim boards, posters and legal murals around the city.

In an alley near Britannia Community Centre just off Commercial Drive, Seva is spraying paint on a blank grey wall. He is working intently on a mural that stretches the full length of the building. He is using his skills legally for a change, and enjoying it.

"I took two or three RestART sessions, and I learned a lot ... I didn't really like art when I was bombing," he says. "They taught me how to go into other mediums – not just words and tags and bombs and pieces – but trying to do people, and abstract stuff. And they had all the painting tools and resources. Everything you'd need."

"Before, I didn't even like art. I just liked tagging. Now I like it. I'm going into Grade 9 and I'm going to take art."

Seva's (and others') work is on display in murals at 2846 West Broadway, and in the lane leading to Britannia Community Centre, just off Commercial Drive. Odd Squad Productions also recently produced a documentary on RestART that aired in October. In the work it's clear that for these talented artists, the long route – and the transformations along the way – are a source of inspiration. Seva says he owes much of his own transformation to the Black Book Sessions. Many prefer to take the front door to a career. Others, like Seva, take the alley in the back. **VF**

If you would like to support youth programs like the **Black Book Sessions**, call **Vancouver Foundation's Donor Services** at 604-688-2204 or visit our website at www.vancouverfoundation.ca. If you would like more information about the **Black Book Sessions**, call **Jessy Wollen** at the Roundhouse: 778-320-8587.

Senior Animals in Need Today Society

The SAINTS come marching in

Senior animals
find sanctuary at
a Mission hospice

BY CATHERINE CLEMENT | PHOTOS SHEENA STAPLES



Senior-age dogs like Suzy (left) and Rosebud (below) find sanctuary at SAINTS, a Mission-based animal shelter.

"She was emaciated and dirty. She had glaucoma in one eye. She was crippled. Her back end sagged. And her rib cage was kicked in: likely someone had been booting her," says Carol Hines, describing the first time she set eyes on an aging Rottweiler cross named Rosebud.

"If you touched her along her side, she would fall to the ground screaming. She broke our hearts. We decided to rescue her; otherwise she would be put down."

Hines is a serious, no-nonsense woman. But she is also someone with enormous compassion. A nurse by day, she runs Senior Animals in Need Today Society (SAINTS) in her off-hours, on her own property. Located on three acres in a rural area of Mission, SAINTS is the home of last resort to dozens of aging and ailing former pets and farm animals.

"The seniors and the special needs animals, they don't have any place to go. They require a lot of care, a lot of knowledge and a lot of expertise."

Most of the animals that come to SAINTS are at the end of their lives. Many have cancer or other serious diseases that require special medications and care. Their previous owners were either unable or unwilling to provide the medical attention needed. But under Hines, something magical frequently happens.

"Our animals live much longer than anyone expects them to. Animals that we get in that we think are going to be dead in two weeks, sometimes 18 months later are still with us because we can control their symptoms."

"Most of us, when we get sick and we're told we have a terminal disease, our lives end at that moment. We all of a sudden become sick," says Hines. "Whereas animals don't do that. Give them the medications they need to feel good and they'll just keep doing whatever they're doing. They will eat their cookies, play, boss each other around, boss me around."

This intensive care and attention doesn't come cheap. The bill

for SAINTS can run as high as \$14,000 a month. And although she receives no government support, Hines manages to find the money through private donations and through support from Vancouver Foundation donors interested in animal welfare.

Hines says she recognizes that some people might object to investing in animals at a time when there are so many people living in poverty. But, she points out, only a small fraction of charitable giving goes to animal welfare issues. "I respect that some may not want to give to animals. But if they really object to supporting animals, then they should at least support and promote policies that help reduce the unwanted animal population. They should be advocating for affordable spaying or neutering."

And Rosebud? Hines had Rosebud's diseased eye removed and, over time, the sweet-natured dog gained weight and learned to trust again. Initially shy of anyone touching her, within a week or so, Rosebud would "slide across the floor in her crippled, crab-walk way" to get attention from anyone willing to give it. "She just wanted to sit there for hours with her head in your hands," says Hines.

"Rosebud had probably about six months with us," she adds with a change of tone in her voice. "But the interesting thing about Rose is that even though she had this horrible life, where no day was ever easy, all she cared about at the end of her life was that so many people loved her and held her and cared for her." **VF**



For more information on SAINTS visit: www.saintsrescue.ca
To support projects like this one, contact **Vancouver Foundation Donor Services** at 604-688-2204 or visit: www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Beauty Night

Because dignity is beautiful

BY SONDI BRUNER | PHOTOS AARON CHUNG



Volunteer Gary Smith styles a Beauty Night participant's hair in the Downtown Eastside.

It's a warm August evening in the Downtown Eastside, and a community room at the Portland Hotel Society is filled with women being pampered with haircuts, manicures, massages, makeup applications and facial scrubs. In the middle of it all, Cherryse Kaiser is finishing up a reiki treatment. She's as luminescent as the cherry red tights, orange polka-dotted blouse and bright pink flip-flops she wears.

She wasn't always that way, though. Growing up in a conservative Christian family in Southern Alberta, Kaiser was born male but always felt she was destined to be a woman. It wasn't until she began attending Beauty Night two years ago that she was able to fulfil her enduring dream of being accepted as a woman.

"I came to realize that beauty is not skin deep. It goes right down to the core of your deepest inner soul. Right to who I am," she

says. "I've had such a wondrous inner blossoming."

This is the healing power of Beauty Night Society, a non-profit that provides makeovers, life skills programming and fitness services to marginalized women. Its clients range from sex workers and seniors to women and children, along with a small percentage of transgendered women like Kaiser.

"What Beauty Night did for me is – every week – nurtured me in the most quiet, unspoken, no-pressure way, treating me special," she says softly. "For the first time in my life, socially, I fit. I've got a group of people I can relate to, and who finally give me the feedback that they relate to me. It's amazing."

Beauty Night Society is the brainchild of Caroline MacGillivray, who began the organization after an experience she had volunteering in the Downtown Eastside at the WISH Drop-in Centre.



Beauty Night Society provides makeovers, life skills training and fitness services to marginalized women.



A sex worker had arrived at the centre after a bad day, feeling downtrodden and upset. The woman was trying to curl her hair with a donated curling iron, but was having trouble, so MacGillivray offered to step in – and then had an unexpected revelation.

"It started feeling like the way it did when I'd go to a high school dance, or when you're getting ready to go out with your girlfriends," MacGillivray says. "Just that sense of camaraderie when you do each other's hair and makeup and then go out for a night on the town. All of a sudden it wasn't about the fact that I was terrible at doing her hair, it was more about the fact that we were just two individuals having a really good time."

After that, MacGillivray got so many requests from WISH clients for hairdos, she knew she was onto something. She canvassed hair stylists, beauticians and massage therapists to volunteer their time for an official Beauty Night in December 2000, which was attended by more than 70 women.

The non-profit blossomed from there by word of mouth. Downtown Eastside women told other agencies how great the program was and, before she knew it, MacGillivray was doing "makeover outreach" all over the city. Now, the program has expanded to Toronto and Victoria and includes a literacy component, fitness classes, artistic activities and a Christmas stocking drive in addition to makeovers. All of the programs are run entirely by more than 400 dedicated volunteers. In the last 10 years, they've given more than 11,000 makeovers.

Makeovers are a great method of reintroducing touch to women who have experienced violence, and they can make a huge difference to their health and self-esteem, says MacGillivray. "The power

of touch – it blows me away to this day how important that is," she says. "Especially after hearing the women saying things like, 'People are touching me and they're not afraid to touch me,' or 'They are touching me and they don't want anything from me.'"

A Vancouver Foundation grant of \$45,000, allocated over the next three years, will allow Beauty Night to hire a full-time co-ordinator to provide more support to women and ensure the organization grows in a sustainable way.

For Teresa Fosbrook, who has dealt with an alcohol addiction, Beauty Night is a welcome weekly reprieve, a pleasurable diversion from her troubles. "I come to Beauty Night because it's fun and it makes me forget about things," she says. "I usually feel better when I go home. It takes me away from some of my problems. It just makes me feel happier."

MacGillivray has seen many women walk out of the program with an improved attitude and become motivated to take better care of their health at home. "Being able to create an environment where [the women] feel safe, where they feel good about who they are, I think that's really empowering," she says. "And when you feel good about yourself, you start believing anything is possible. To see people taking care of themselves, where they feel that they're worth taking care of, it's really exciting and very beautiful." **VF**

To find out more about Beauty Night, visit: www.beautynight.org
To donate to this or other Vancouver Foundation-supported programs, contact Donor Services at 604-688-2204.

Bead by bead

A collection of handmade containers reflects one man's search for his culture, spirituality and sense of self

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR | PHOTOS TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



Doubt clouded Ron Horsefall's mind. "Can I really do this?" he asked himself, as he began to craft his first piece.

He had the potential – he'd always had that. He had beads and materials, thanks to a \$1,000 grant from the Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grant Program, a partnership between Vancouver Foundation and Carnegie Centre. And because of this grant, for the first time in his 44 years, he had the confidence to call himself an artist.

"The grant made me accountable and responsible for my artwork," says Horsefall. "I'd been commissioned to do work before but this was different – this was a whole body of work."

This time, Horsefall wasn't giving in to the naysayers in his head. This time, he says, he just did it. "I had all of these ideas inside of me I wanted to express. Once I got out of my head and got over myself and started doing the work, it all started coming out."

The stunning result is *Out of the Ashes*, a collection of 18 intricately crafted, brilliantly coloured beaded containers that represent the spiritual journey of Horsefall's life – from surviving the nightmare that was Canada's residential school system, overcoming nearly a quarter-century of substance abuse and reclaiming his lost culture as a member of the Pasqua First Nation.

He says: "When I sit there beading, all the feelings start coming – they range from happy to sad and everything in between. Sometimes I'd be sitting there crying and sometimes I'd be laughing. That's what goes into each piece, it's me."

The Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grants Program was established with \$100,000 from Vancouver Foundation donors. Over the last year, the program has given 68 grants of \$500 to \$1,000 to artists like Horsefall who live or work in the Downtown Eastside or otherwise have a strong connection to the community.

"The Downtown Eastside is a great breeding ground for artistic talent, but many people lack the means to make progress with their art, and they aren't eligible for traditional arts grants," notes Faye Wightman, CEO of Vancouver Foundation. "This program aims to give talented artists the support they need to develop their skills, improve their marketing and take their art to the next level, artistically and/or financially."

Horsefall, who is gay and HIV-positive, receives disability assistance from the provincial government and lives in native housing. The grant allowed him to buy more beads in more colours, which made it possible for him to produce bigger pieces like *Phoenix Rising Out of the Ashes*, a beaded container that stands 20 centimetres tall and took 150 hours to produce. The work is all the more impressive considering he is self-taught.

Ten years ago, Horsefall stopped drinking and started beading. The slow, methodical nature of the art became a meditation for him. "People are so distracted by the world they don't allow themselves to catch up to themselves," he says. "They ignore their feelings. When I am beading, I catch up with myself and the world slows down."

Beadung was also a way to reconnect with his culture and spirituality. Horsefall's family belongs to the Pasqua First Nation in Saskatchewan. But whatever knowledge of culture and spirituality he might have had was obliterated by residential school



Opposite: Ron Horsefall and one of his beaded containers.

Above: Some pieces can take as long as 150 hours each to create.

abuse. First his grandparents attended, then his parents, and finally Horsefall, who was sent when he was only five years old. At the age of 10, he left the school and started drowning his feelings with alcohol.

As a young adult, he studied art history at the University of Calgary, then dropped out and gave in to his addictions. "I told my mom I would never end up on skid row, and after years of drinking and drug abuse, that's where I ended up," he recalls. In 1996, he was faced with a sobering reality – an AIDS diagnosis. The choice was simple: go clean or die.

Horsefall chose to go clean. But after nearly 25 years of substance abuse, it took a few more before he succeeded in detoxing.

He moved back to Saskatchewan for a couple of years and became an AIDS activist, sharing his story to help others come to terms with the disease. With better health and effective medication, he no longer displays the symptoms of AIDS.

This past May, Horsefall had his first show ever at the Carnegie Centre. He says he's so proud of the collection that he's not ready to sell it, he just wants to share his creations with the world.

And as always, he is amazed that he's still here – alive, sober and talking – after what he has been through in his life. "When [I] see the people on the street mired in their addiction, I feel for them because I know where they're at," he says. "And I know their potential. There's so much potential down there. I know because I rose out of that." Like a phoenix from the ashes. **VF**

For more information on **Downtown Eastside Small Arts Grants**, visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca/smallarts or call 604-688-2204.



■ BY KIMBERLEY FEHR

Room with a view

Covenant House gives homeless youth more than a bed

PHOTO: Fotoserch

By the time Nicole reached Grade 11, she was “completely out of control.” There was the drinking and the drugs; there was the binging and purging; and there was her dysfunctional family who put padlocks on the fridge in a misguided attempt to save her from herself.

By the time she was 18, she was drunk “almost 24-7,” and had made multiple trips to hospital psych wards. Quoted in a CBC radio interview last year, she said: “I was never really given any – I won’t say any – but I really wasn’t given a lot of help. I would briefly talk to a psychiatrist, usually while I was still drunk.”

And then they’d send her on her way.

In January 2009, after her worst month ever, she sobered up at the age of 20 with the help of the Covenant House Mental Health Program, a partnership between the downtown youth shelter and the InnerCity Youth Mental Health team at St. Paul’s Hospital.

The premise of the program is simple: a team of eight psychiatrists goes to where the kids are, instead of expecting the kids to come to them. Participants have weekly psychiatric appointments, meetings with youth workers, support to find housing, and a variety of life skills courses and other activities they can join. The emphasis is on building relationships so they regain a sense of trust in the world.

Thanks to the program, Nicole was able to put a name to her erratic behaviour – bipolar disorder. Because she was sober and had a place to stay at Covenant House, she was able to follow the required regimen for her mood stabilizer. “It was definitely a bit of a relief because something like bipolar is an actual diagnosable condition and that means there’s help for it. I wasn’t just crazy,” she says.

Nicole is one of 80 at-risk and homeless youth aged 19 to 24 being supported by this innovative program, which has an impressive appointment attendance rate of 80 per cent.

“When I first started working here, there was no psychiatric help like this available. There was nowhere to go,” says Tracy Brown, who co-ordinates the program at Covenant House.

Youth workers could only watch powerlessly as their clients struggled to deal with undiagnosed and untreated mental health problems, even psychosis. A psychiatrist came once a week to help those on the verge of harming themselves or others. “We were just firefighting,” recalls Brown.

The psychiatrists at St. Paul’s realized there had to be a better way, and launched this project with Covenant House in 2007. In 2009, Vancouver Foundation’s Youth Homelessness Initiative stepped in with a \$200,000 grant to help cover two more years of the project, which has already won awards from St. Paul’s Hospital, the City of Vancouver and Eva’s Initiatives, a non-profit based in Toronto.

Covenant House sees 2,000 homeless youth a year, and an estimated 40 to 60 per cent have moderate to severe mental illness. About 70 per cent come from foster homes. “At 19, these youth have no family,” says Brown, adding, “A lot of people think drugs and alcohol are the problems with these youth. I always thought that was just a Band-Aid.”

The program’s lead psychiatrist, Dr. Steve Mathias, or “Dr. Steve,” as the youth call him, has a small office in a single room occupancy building where 10 of the program participants live. He speaks softly, with a faraway look in his green eyes. “We’ve helped youth who [literally] thought they were fish swimming on the sidewalk. We have some kids who believe they are being monitored or followed or persecuted and they have to keep on the run. We have kids who have self-harmed to the extent that they have cuts upon cuts on their arms.”

On a tour of the building, Mathias enthusiastically and genuinely greets each young person he sees, asking them how they’re doing and chatting for a few minutes.

On Wednesdays, members of the mental health team prepare a drop-in breakfast. On Thursdays, they do lunch. More than just a free meal for hungry young people, it’s a chance to build relationships, and reinforce the knowledge that someone will be there for them no matter what. “It’s that one meal that is cooked in their home just for them,” says Brown.

They’re an incredibly traumatized population, adds Mathias. “The kids we see are kids whose parents were strung out on crack, kids who were physically beaten, kids whose mothers walked out on them when they were eight years old, never to see them again.” And that kind of damage doesn’t get reversed overnight. “The human brain actually develops differently when a person is raised in that kind of environment,” says Mathias.

“Attachment is from cradle to grave; it can happen all through life, depending on the influences that come into your life,” says Brown. The good news is that it’s possible, over time, to help them.

On his way out the door, Mathias asks a brown-haired young man how he is doing; “Good enough,” comes the answer.

These young people have their entire lives in front of them, but many have been so traumatized that respect is new for them, says Mathias. Some are incredibly bright or have amazing talents; they are painters, computer geeks, soccer players. But they haven’t been able to live out their potential. “We’ve become a society where we just expect people to find their way. With these youth, that’s just unreasonable because they need a lot of help. They need years of help, but they get there.”

Progress can be measured in the tiniest details – it could be as simple as someone lifting his or her head up to make eye contact for the first time, or sleeping through the night.

As for Nicole, she was eventually able to enrol in university and hold down a part-time job at a restaurant. She says when she’s sober and happy, the possibilities are endless: “But really I just want to feel like a member of the world and a person among people. That’s my biggest dream. And it’s starting to happen.” **VF**

To find out more about the **Covenant House Mental Health Program**, email info@covenanthousebc.org or call 604-638-4438. If you would like to help young people like Nicole realize their dreams, contact **Vancouver Foundation’s Donor Services** at 604-688-2204 and ask about our Youth Homelessness Initiative.

Sowing the seeds

Vancouver Island farmers bring new ideas to the table

| BY KIMBERLEY FEHR



In just two days, supermarket shelves were nearly empty on Vancouver Island. It was November 2003, and the ferry strike had escalated to a complete service shut-down, which meant no ferries, no trucks and far fewer food shipments. That image of empty shelves, and what it could have meant for the people of the Island, still haunts Sandra Mark, project manager for a new organization called Vancouver Island Heritage Foodservice Co-operative.

"We have moved to a corporatized, globalized food system that has hollowed out the infrastructure for local food systems everywhere," says Mark. "The largest proportion of the food system is owned and controlled by six big transnational corporations."

Small-scale, local farmers are struggling for survival. They've been squeezed out of the market for years, unable to compete with the supply or the prices of factory farms, which means there are fewer farms left on Vancouver Island. "The vulnerability of the Island is really obvious," says Mark, who for the past 10 years has been working toward a plan to rebuild the local food system on the Island.

The story is the same elsewhere. "California is one of the major suppliers of food to B.C., and people in California can't eat that food because it's for export," she says. "Same with Mexico. Why is there such a demand for local food and so little in the supermarket?"

Mark and Frank Moreland, her business and life partner, are lead researchers for a

partnership called the Island Good Food Initiative. Their work aims to answer an even more pressing question: how can farmers survive on Vancouver Island?

Fifty years ago, Vancouver Island grew most of its own food. Now, the Island grows only five per cent of the food consumed there. (Mark calculates this by comparing food spending per person from the 2006 census and gross farm receipts for the Island.)

"The fundamental problem is that farmers do not make enough money," says Mark. "And young people see no future in the business because it's very hard work for nearly no money." She says many farmers have no choice but to work at other jobs just to support their farming "habit."

Mark and Nanaimo Foodshare received \$130,000 in funding for community-based research from Vancouver Foundation donors between 2006 and 2008 to address the issue. The Island Good Food Initiative was formed as a partnership of many concerned organizations to guide the research.

"This grant was the best money I've ever had my hands on," says Mark. "We were able to do what we needed to do, to have the luxury of studying this situation and bringing many levels of the food chain to the table." Now she is helping to implement solutions at the Foodservice Co-op.

There are many answers, but one simple solution is pizza toppings.

Mark explains, "You can sell a carrot

and you'll get next to nothing If you wash it, grate it and put it in a bag with a fancy label, you get a little bit more. If it's organic, you get more. If you make it into carrot soup, you get quite a bit more for that one carrot."

Pizza toppings are the pinnacle of the value-added chain. And the man at the top of that pinnacle is Ken Babich, the University of Victoria's director of purchasing. Babich spends at least \$1 million annually on dry goods, milk, cheese, meat and produce. Pizza toppings alone come in at almost \$300,000. If there's one truism in life, it's that students like pizza – lots of pizza.

Mark's research revealed that farmers' markets, lovely as they are, are not enough. For farmers to survive, they need business plans; they can benefit from working together in co-ops on processing, distribution and marketing; and they need big clients on board – public institutions like universities and hospitals that spend millions of dollars each year on food.

A few years ago, Babich got serious about buying local after attending a farmers' meeting on institutional purchasing – part of Mark's research.

"When you see the heartache and pain these farmers go through, it's all doom and gloom," he recalls. "They saw no hope because nobody's supporting them." At another farmers' meeting, the tone changed. There, Babich met a woman from Duncan who had created No Nuttin' energy bars for people struggling with allergies. Babich, who was looking for local, healthy snacks to sell in university vending machines, told the woman, "We could be selling those in our vending machines." He connected her with his supplier and now UVic students can buy them.

Babich realized there were also other, more pressing reasons to start sourcing local food. "If we had an earthquake, how would we survive on the Island?" he says. The question hangs in the air as he explains the university's "quadruple bottom line" approach to purchasing that considers environmental practices, social and labour issues, the community and the economic bottom line.

With help from the Foodservice Co-op, UVic identified produce items that local farmers could grow in sufficient quantities, and stipulated that those products would have to be supplied by Island farmers. In 2009, 46 per cent of the produce UVic purchased was sourced locally. Requests for proposals were broken down into smaller batches so local distributors had an opportunity to bid. A separate contract for pizzas required the toppings to be sourced locally. UVic is following up to ensure local farmers profit from the contract.

It's these types of connections, and this type of concern, that the Island Good Food Initiative and Nanaimo Foodshare's work helped to facilitate.

"The image of the fierce, independent farmer is no longer viable," says Dr. Bill Code, president of the Island Farmers' Alliance, and a board member for 10 years. "Farmers' markets make us all feel warm and fuzzy, but we need to move beyond that, working together to solve the problem as a community."

Code turned to farming after having to scale down his anesthesiology practice following a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis at age 42. His seven-acre parcel in Duncan grows blackberries, loganberries, sweet potatoes and dried beans and is home to emu, sheep and two pasture pigs. He says one reason small farms struggle is a lack of trained labour for farm work and food processing.

In partnership with the Nanaimo Association for Community Living, the co-operative received a \$100,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation's Disability Supports for Employment Fund in 2008 to create a social enterprise that will train people with developmental disabilities in how to work on farms and in food processing. This pool of trained workers will help farmers produce more, to better meet demand for local food.

In France, certain types of artisan cheeses, butters and other food products are sold under the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* designation, just like wines



from certain regions. Quebec has a similar system. B.C. doesn't, but this is another option Mark is investigating that may help farmers gain the cachet (and the prices) they need to survive on the Island.

"People are taking much more interest in and responsibility for their food," says Code. "As that happens, the [perception] of the farmer will grow into someone who is very passionate and knows a lot about food, produces a quality product and feels good about what they are doing for their community and for their grandchildren." **VF**

To learn more about the Foodservice Co-op, visit www.heritagefoodservice.coop, or call 250-591-2216. To support other programs like this one, contact Vancouver Foundation's Donor Services at 604-688-2204.

A Bolt of Botz

A high-energy Crown prosecutor turns her energy and drive to the community

BY CATHERINE CLEMENT | PHOTOS JAIME KOWAL



Ursula Botz, Crown prosecutor, biker and Vancouver Foundation board member.



Ursula Botz is hard to miss in a crowd. Tall, blonde, lean and impeccably dressed, she towers over almost everyone in the room, even in flat shoes.

By day, Botz is a consummate professional – a prosecutor working in the B.C. Criminal Appeals Branch. On evenings and weekends, the 40-something Botz is a self-described “über-jock.” When she’s not on her road bike, she’s dragging herself out of bed at 5 a.m. to swim in the ocean. “This past summer, I swam from West Vancouver to Kitsilano,” she says proudly. “It was just something I wanted to do for fun.”

Another of her passions – one that occupies a substantial amount of time – is Vancouver Foundation. As both a donor and a volunteer (she’s a board director and has chaired several Foundation granting committees), Botz is left with little time to do anything else.

Though she wasn’t always so focused. Born in Germany, Botz immigrated to Canada with her family when she was 11. “I totally remember first coming to Canada. We came in August, and in September we started school. We had all the wrong clothes,” she says, laughing heartily. “And we didn’t speak a word of English. Not one word. I didn’t even know how to ask where the bathroom was.

“Some of the kids teased us. Most of them didn’t know what to make of us. Not surprisingly, I have a lot of sympathy for new immigrants.”

It didn’t take Botz long to learn the language and adjust her fashion sense, but it did take her many years to decide what she wanted to do for a career. Even after completing

her master’s in Soviet and Eastern European history, she had no idea what she wanted to do for a career. She ended up enrolling in law at Dalhousie University; not because she loved law, but because it was something that would give her a real job.

Botz leans forward and lowers her voice, as if about to share a secret. “I ended up in law by default. It is a well-kept secret that a lot of people end up in law school because they don’t know what else to do.”

She graduated, got her feet wet working for a federal court judge in Ottawa, then headed west and eventually landed a job in the Prosecutor’s Office.

“Working in law, especially for the Crown, is interesting and rewarding, but also challenging. You deal with some fascinating issues. But you hear many difficult and tragic stories,” she says.

Botz pauses and looks off into the distance. “The ones that stick with you are the ones where there has been some horrible impact on the victim. That is the most heart-wrenching part,” says Botz. “The reality is most of my work is about dealing with conflict. Every file we get is about something bad that has happened: someone has hurt someone else financially, physically, emotionally. Not surprisingly, that starts to colour your world view.”

That’s why Botz is so enthusiastic about Vancouver Foundation. “It’s totally opposite from what I experience all day long at work,” she says, suddenly becoming animated. “Through the Foundation, I hear about all these wonderful community projects and people who are making our neighbourhoods better places to live. It reminds me there is a lot of good in the world.”

As the chair of the Foundation’s Children, Youth and Family Committee, Botz reviews proposals for community projects and, with a group of expert community advisers, helps recommend which ones to support. “It’s so wonderful to know there are simple ways we can make our community better. Even small amounts of money can buy kids from an inner-city neighbourhood their own basketballs, or help a group of troubled teens learn how to rebuild a car, learn new skills and stay out of trouble.”

Although Botz only has one more year on the Foundation board, her influence will endure: “I set up my own donor fund at the Foundation so I can be assured that well into the future I will be leaving a legacy to my community,” she says.

But right now there are 50 kilometres of open road with her name on it, and she can’t wait to get back on her bike. **VF**

For more information on becoming a donor, contact
Vancouver Foundation Donor Services at 604-688-2204.

New Teacher's Creative Activities Fund



The memory of Emily Longworth lives on through a fund for new teachers.

The Longworth Legacy

BY DOROTHY BARTOSZEWSKI | PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE LONGWORTH FAMILY



Her enthusiasm is still contagious. It radiates from her toddler photos. It's there in her megawatt grin as she savours dim sum in Hong Kong, poses with Christmas reindeer and wise men in Bolivia and laps up ice cream on a sunny day outing with a pal.

Emily Longworth lived with a rare gusto. She loved people, travel – experiencing other cultures and sharing her own. When she applied to do her first year of university in England, at Queen's University, her parents were worried she might be homesick – but not a chance. Emily was too busy making friends and exploring Europe on the weekends to hanker for home.

So no one was surprised when Emily chose a career as a teacher, where her people skills could shine. And it was entirely in character when Emily, as a student teacher in a lower-income, culturally diverse neighbourhood, bought teaching supplies with the money she made from waitressing and helped subsidize students who couldn't pay for field trips.

"Sometimes I would pick her up after a field trip, and I could see how all the students really responded to her – they just loved her," says Emily's father, Tom Longworth. "And she really loved them."

Emily had the makings of an incredible educator. But she never got the chance to share all her joie de vivre with a class of her own. After graduating as a teacher, the 25-year-old celebrated with a backpacking trip to South America, where she died with her friend Lauren and eight others in a hostel fire in Chile in February 2007.

Emily's death was a terrible tragedy. But even while dealing with the initial shock and grief, her family wanted the good intentions of family and friends to be channelled in a way that would keep Emily's generous spirit alive.

"As soon as people heard what happened, large quantities of flowers started appearing on our doorstep. We understood – people wanted to do something and flowers were what they knew to do. But we wanted to find a more lasting legacy for Emily," says Tom.

A family friend suggested setting up a charitable fund through Vancouver Foundation. Tom and his daughter Katie investigated, and were impressed by the Foundation's professionalism, low overhead and capacity to accept donations in less than 24 hours.

"The Vancouver Foundation staff were fantastic. They understood the circumstances and did all the administrative stuff so we could focus on what we needed to do," says Tom.

The fund was easily ready in time for Emily's celebration of life. The Emily Longworth New Teacher's Creative Activities Fund has since received hundreds of donations in amounts from \$25 to \$10,000. It gives grants annually to fund curriculum enrichment or extracurricular activities by student teachers that "promote multicultural understanding, healthy lifestyle and environmental awareness, and inspire students to achieve their full potential in life."

The fund has already supported a plethora of creative projects. It has helped Grade 1 students create "cuddle quilts" to be donated to children who have lost a family member to cancer and enabled Grade 5 and 6 students to start a school-wide composting program. It also financed a permanent, multimedia mural about the oceans, produced by Grade 2 and 3 students under the direction of artist Angela Grossman.

"With Emily's Fund, the teachers don't receive money themselves; the projects benefit students and the broader community. We also try and direct it to lower-income kids who might not otherwise get these kinds of opportunities," Tom says.

"My wife Connie, my daughter Katie and I are all really involved with the fund. Bureaucracy used to really annoy Emily, so we've made it very simple to apply. The teachers who get the award are the same age as Emily was, and they're all very enthusiastic. We've met all of them and have visited the schools and seen the projects, and we send out reports to all the contributors on what's happened with the fund. It's really helped us in the grieving process, and it helps other people too. It's easy to forget it's not just the family that's grieving. Emily had so many friends."

"The fund has offered a place for all these people – from my business colleagues, people who know our family, Emily's teachers, to the parents of her students – to show their sympathy and remember Emily in a way that will make a difference to many children. We're really, really pleased with how it has worked out," says Tom. **VF**

To donate to the **Emily Longworth New Teacher's Creative Activities Fund**, or set up a memorial fund to honour someone special in your life, contact **Vancouver Foundation Donor Services** at **604-688-2204**.

-Finding a voice

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR | PHOTOS CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO

On the brink of extinction,
the Squamish language survives
on the tenacity of the nation's youth



"Our Kulture," a duet by local rapper Discreet Da Chosen 1 and the Sto:lo band Ostwelve, blares in the background as 27-year-old Orene Askew gets everything in order behind the scenes, preparing to go live for her weekly show *Sne'waylh* on Vancouver's Co-op Radio.

Unlike the song, Askew doesn't belt out her love for her Squamish culture; she talks it out with activists like today's guest, 83-year-old Haida elder Bill Lightbown; with artists like Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, and athletes like 2007 World Champion hoop dancer Dallas Arcand.

The cornerstone of the show is 10 to 15 minutes of basic Squamish language lessons – *sne'waylh* means "our teachings" in Squamish. The show also covers everything from the Alberta tar sands and mining in First Nations territory to Squamish band elections and the importance of cultural traditions like storytelling.

"I'm having the time of my life," she says when the show is over, her brown eyes aglow. "I have so much knowledge about my culture, I feel I need to share it, I need to educate people about it."



Opposite: Orene Askew.
Above: Askew interviews guests on
her Squamish-language Co-op Radio
program, Tuesdays 1-2 p.m., 102.7 FM.

Askew, who is half Squamish and half African American, grew up on the Mission Reserve in North Vancouver, near Lonsdale. She speaks Squamish, sort of, but she's not fluent – and she's not alone. Only 10 fluent Squamish language speakers remain out of nearly 4,000 band members, and most are over 65 years old. The language is dying.

"Nearly extinct," is the term used by the May 2010 *Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages*, prepared by the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council. The report found that less than five per cent of First Nations people in B.C. are fluent in their own language – an after-effect of more than a century of residential schools, where First Nations children as young as five were taken from their families, forced to speak English and often subjected to physical and sexual abuse.

Askew tells the story of a good friend of her grandmother's. "She spoke Squamish fluently. That's all they spoke at home. When she was taken away to the residential school, she had no idea what was going on. She doesn't speak it anymore, she doesn't know it at all – not one word. She was 12 then; now she's 88. She said, 'They stripped everything from me.' I think stories like that need to be told."

While many First Nations languages in B.C. are teetering on the brink of oblivion, the good news is that 40 per cent of the semi-fluent speakers are under the age of 25. And organizations like Vancouver Foundation are acknowledging the need to preserve First Nations language and culture.

In 2009, Vancouver Foundation donors gave a total of \$325,000 to programs that help B.C. First Nations either preserve their language, territory and culture, or overcome economic issues in their communities. *Sne'waylh* received \$15,000, which helps cover wages for Askew, who landed the part-time job just after graduating from BCIT's radio broadcasting program. She also works at a liquor store, DJs weddings and plays lacrosse for the North Shore Indians.

Being the only native person out of 80 people in the BCIT program, she says she was very quiet in her first year. She says she felt like she didn't deserve to be there, so she didn't say much. One of her instructors called her on it. "She said to me, 'What are you doing here? What is your purpose? I know you are good enough to do this; I just don't know what is wrong with you?'"

It brought Askew to tears, but it also got her out of her shell. She got an internship at *The Beat 94.5 FM*, and worked so hard in the second year of the program that she graduated with an 87 per cent average.

"I took all that negativity and said 'I've got to prove these people wrong,'" says Askew. "Second year I felt like my opinion was important – and you couldn't get me to shut up." **VF**

For more information on how you can support education projects like this one, contact
Vancouver Foundation's Donor Services at 604-688-2204 or visit our website at www.vancouverfoundation.ca

The less-than-golden years

A new service is reaching out to seniors at risk of suicide

| BY DOROTHY BARTOSZEWSKI

Growing old is not for the faint of heart, but a new program designed to help struggling seniors should at least make it a little easier.

Although we call them the golden years, depression and suicide among seniors is not uncommon. The end of a career, the loss of a spouse, a shrinking circle of friends, declining health and sometimes financial problems can all contribute to a sense of hopelessness and a desire to escape through suicide.

Some seniors don't know how to reach out for help, and many aren't found in time. Men, and in particular Caucasian men, are at high risk for suicide. In B.C., the suicide rate for all men averages 17.5 deaths per 100,000 people; that rate doubles among men over 85.

Older men are often socially isolated and have trouble opening up about personal issues. They are less likely to warn others of suicidal intentions, and when they do attempt suicide they tend to use more lethal methods, such as guns. They are also more likely to live alone, and so are less likely to be found in time to be saved following a suicide attempt.

The problem of senior suicide could grow substantially over the coming decades as baby boomers begin retiring, swelling the population of senior citizens. Communities have become increasingly concerned about how this age group will cope with major life changes and health issues.

All of which makes the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of B.C.'s Seniors in Crisis Project extremely timely. The project, which is still in its early stages, trains "gatekeepers" – people who are in frequent contact with seniors – in crisis intervention and suicide prevention, so that seniors who are struggling can be identified and supported.



"There hasn't been a lot of work done in this area, so we are learning as we go," says Ian Ross, executive director of the Crisis Centre. With funding from Vancouver Foundation donors, the Crisis Centre is using Vancouver's West End Seniors' Network as a pilot site. The Crisis Centre is also working to increase vulnerable seniors' access to their emergency phone services, and to improve the relevance of the crisis line for seniors.

"In most cases involving suicide, the act itself is not an impulsive decision. In fact, most people who attempt suicide talk about it beforehand without any immediate plans to carry it out. Most people who die by suicide give some indication of their intentions prior to killing themselves; one-third leave a note," adds Ross.

A recent call to the crisis line from Helen*, is proof positive that having someone to reach out to can make all the difference. In her 80s, Helen was struggling with suicidal thoughts and had attempted to take her life three times in the past.

A desperate call one night to the crisis line and some time discussing her depression with a volunteer helped Helen get through a rough spot. She later told the Crisis Centre just how much that help had meant.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart," Helen wrote in a letter. "Last night was my first time calling the Crisis Centre and I was suicidal. I often have attacks without any warning and feel very depressed. You saved my life last night, and I am so grateful to have access to a service like this one and caring people like you." **VF**

*Name has been changed to respect the privacy of the caller.

The art of planned giving



Life is brighter around some people. Things seem more interesting – more colourful – when you are near them. It's as if these people radiate enthusiasm; their zest for life spills over and suddenly you become more acutely aware of the clouds, the delicate colour and beauty of a flower, the delightful smell as you walk past a bakery and – uncharacteristically – drop in for a croissant and coffee. With some people, you find yourself overwhelmed by the friendly enthusiasm of the moment, carried along by the flood of their fervour.

The French have an expression for this: joie de vivre. It's a feeling of healthy and exuberant enjoyment of life. The people who have this are rare, and it's a gift to be around them. Life-affirming, even. And E.J. is one of these people.

With her shock of white hair, fashionably cut yet tousled, E.J. seems both in vogue and beyond trends. She loves jazz and art, speaks rapturously (and with no small knowledge) about Oscar and Ella, and the work of local visual artists.

She makes an art of the tangent. Her conversation is unpredictable. You might start out talking about the view: a tangled nest of boats in False Creek, her beloved Granville Island framed by mountains in the distance. "I never tire of this vista. It's somehow renewing," she says. And then she veers off in another direction.

But the subject will always come back to something artistic – theatre, dance, music, painting. She is passionate about the arts and about education. She has loved the arts since childhood. And after a career in teaching, E.J. is determined to make sure others have the chance to learn about and appreciate the arts. Through Vancouver Foundation, E.J. recently began making her support more tangible.

"I grew up thinking that my family was poor. But because we were real penny-pinching people and worked hard, we ended up not poor. I learned about philanthropy from my father. He started to give away his money and I realized that's what people do. My father was proud of the fact that he came to Canada with nothing and built a life here. I think he was very grateful to this country. Even

though I was born here, I also feel that way. So a few years ago I looked at what I had. I guess when I realized I could afford to give, I just started to.

"I feel I've been very lucky," she adds. "It's been hard work as well, but I'm in a position now where I have enough. I'm not wealthy, but I have enough, and I've decided to share what I have with others."

She is doing exactly that through a carefully crafted program of legacy giving to various schools, and to Vancouver Foundation. "I have endowed scholarships for the arts at SFU, UBC and Emily Carr. I give to Langara through Vancouver Foundation. And I used the Foundation's *Book of Opportunities* to donate to a project performed at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre," says E.J.

The *Book of Opportunities* is a collection of innovative community projects that are seeking support. Put together by the Foundation, it gives donors access to hundreds of pre-screened community proposals they might otherwise never hear about. "The Book is better than any shopping catalogue," says E.J. "It's a very good idea."

E.J.'s association with the Foundation has been positive, and she is modifying her will. "Over the years, I've realized the Foundation manages donated money very prudently. There's also a transparency that has created a comfort level and confidence for me. I really like the way they're so accessible. You can talk to them. They listen. I can allocate according to my wishes. That, to me, is the easiest way of writing out a will. You don't have to go to your lawyer every time you change or add another charity."

She stops the conversation with a delighted outburst. "Look at this." She bends to hold a brightly coloured flower at the edge of the seawall, as if it were a masterpiece. "It's amazing. Look at that colour!"

"There's a lot to be said for getting older," she muses. "I do like to smell the roses. It's wonderful."

E.J.'s enthusiasm and her planned gift to Vancouver Foundation will ensure that students for many years to come can experience the moment, and create art for the community to enjoy. That's a legacy worth planning for. **VF**

For more information on the Crisis Centre, visit: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca/about-us/contact-us
To support the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre and other programs that provide a vital service to the community, contact Vancouver Foundation Donor Services at 604-688-2204.

To discuss the many options available for legacy giving, contact
Vancouver Foundation Donor Services at 604-688-2204.



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