

vancouver foundation

Spring 2009

stories of modern philanthropy

THE STORY OF THE DORY

A 30-year-old grant is still keeping students afloat

PLATO IN DA 'HOOD

Getting philosophical in downtown Nanaimo

MODEL STUDENTS

A neighbourhood grant gives Burnaby kids a new hobby

A PLACE TO UNPACK

Breaking the cycle of youth homelessness



The First Word . . .

At the moment, Vancouver Foundation, like other charitable organizations in Canada, and like many organizations around the world, is still caught in the storm that has been battering financial markets for more than six months. And we don't know when it will end.



So the cover of this, the third issue of our magazine, seems very apropos. A tiny craft beats against the waves, and in the distance a lighthouse shines its beacon out over stormy waters. In many ways, philanthropy is like that lighthouse. It helps guide the way, and gives us hope in the darkness.

We know that for many people and communities, the focus over the last few months has been simply to survive. And when you are concerned with survival, it's difficult to think about progress.

What makes philanthropy different – and therefore also our work at Vancouver Foundation – is that we remain committed to progress, no matter what the circumstances. So, even when we are drawn to spend all of our energy keeping our heads above water, we still strive to make things better in our community.

Our magazine is again full of stories of charities, donors and citizens who are struggling in this environment, and yet continue to strengthen their communities. The Story of the Dory emphasizes how a single gift continues to give back many years later. Model Students underscores that dozens of lives can be touched even with small amounts of money, and the article entitled A Place to Unpack shows how donors are helping at-risk youth secure stable housing and break the cycle of homelessness.

We feel it's important for us to continue to share with you these true-life dramas; these victories large and small. In the midst of so much bad news, it's worth knowing there are still many good things happening in our communities. These testimonials also underscore the reality that charities in your community continue to need support. In fact, for many non-profits, the economic downturn has only increased demand on their services while funding has dropped.

As citizens, we can all play a role in helping our communities navigate through the storm and arrive safely on shore. We hope you will join Vancouver Foundation in helping our communities to not only survive the recession, but also emerge stronger and more resilient.

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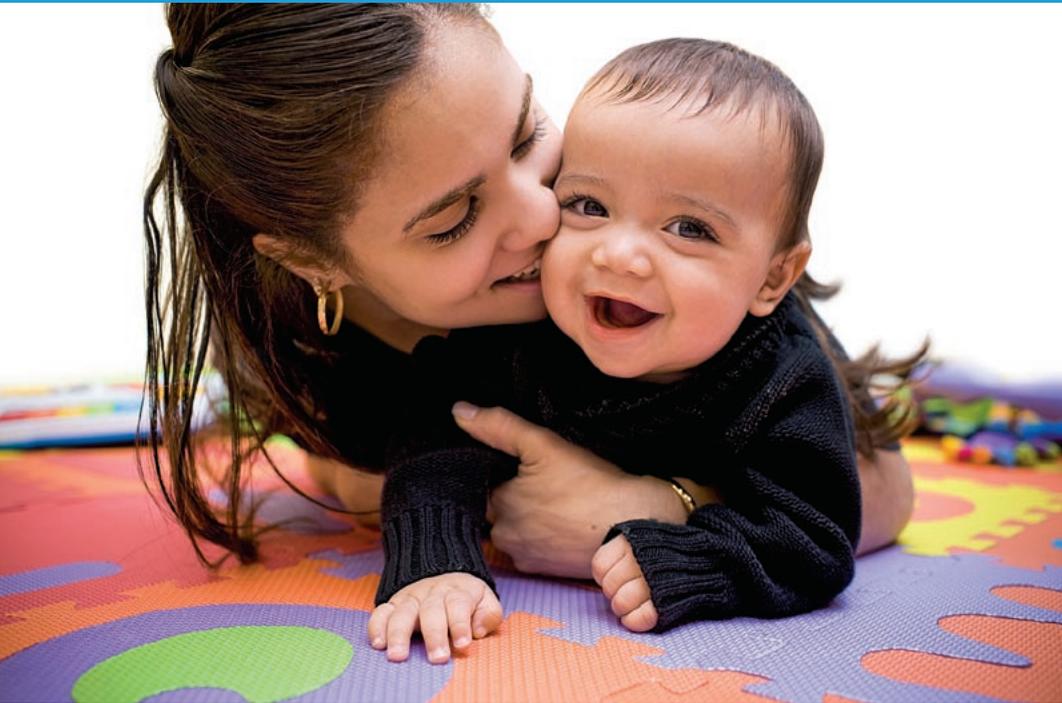
GRANTS AT A GLANCE



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THE MUSIC PLAYS ON

Here are a few of the projects Vancouver Foundation recently supported



Young mothers come home

It's a sad fact that young people aged 16 to 24, especially those with children, face discrimination when trying to find a place to live. Without a home, pregnant girls and young mothers face the prospect of losing their children to government care.

Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative is granting \$330,000 over three years to the Watari Research Association's housing program, which aims to help find housing for young pregnant women and mothers who are dealing with addictions and/or mental health issues. It also provides additional services that make the program work — connections to educational and employment resources, life-skills training and support from outreach workers.

By helping the children avoid government care, the program also aims to prevent future homelessness. Some 45 per cent of children who live in government care experience homelessness within a few years of leaving the system. The opportunity to stay with their mothers gives young children a better chance of success in life. The program also gives mothers a chance to get their lives on track, while enjoying the stability that a home can bring.

Creatively dysfunctional

The Kelowna Art Gallery is mounting a series of art installations in its outdoor Rotary Courtyard space. Entitled "Dysfunctional Chairs," the series involves works in the permanent collection on display in the

gallery's entrance lobby, and the placement of café chairs and tables in summer months in the Rotary Courtyard. Vancouver Foundation granted \$22,000 to the project in 2009 and 2010.



David Diviney, Drift, 2008, picnic table and stained plywood.



Spoken worlds converge

Vancouver has a well-deserved reputation as a home of world-class spoken-word artists, as well as enthusiastic audiences. As part of the 2009 Cultural Olympiad, four spoken-word artists from three continents converged on Granville Island in February, thanks to the support of a \$20,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation.

A Vancouver International Writers Festival event, the Spoken World Project brought together the U.S.A.'s Regie Cabico, the U.K.'s Lemn Sissay, Australia's Morganics and Vancouver's own Kinnie Starr, all backed by improvised grooves from Sal Ferreras and his band, Poetic License.

Emerging young performers had a chance to benefit from the experience of the headliners with a full-day workshop. This project created a unique and unforgettable experience for Vancouver's up-and-comers, while cultivating a younger audience for festival events.



Beautiful problems

The great modernist Marcel Duchamp left the art world at the height of his career to devote more time to chess "because chess creates such beautiful problems." Aiming to carry on this tradition is Vancouver's Radix Theatre, with a production entitled *Beautiful Problems*.

Beautiful Problems is inspired by Duchamp's quote, and by the landmark 1997 chess match in which IBM's Deep Blue computer defeated world grandmaster chess champion Garry Kasparov, considered to be the greatest player in the history of the game. The historic match will serve as a springboard to examine humanity's evolving relationship with technology and its rooted compulsion to war.

This project is part of the theatre's ongoing effort to create original, socially relevant interdisciplinary performance in the collaborative style of "devised theatre" that it has practiced since 1988. Vancouver Foundation granted \$15,000 to the production.

Where wild horses run

In the Brittany Triangle, a wilderness area between B.C.'s Coast Mountains and the foothills of the Chilcotin Plateau, wild horses still run free. They have a magnificent past – possibly descendants of horses brought to the Americas in the 15th century by Spanish conquistadors – and an uncertain future.

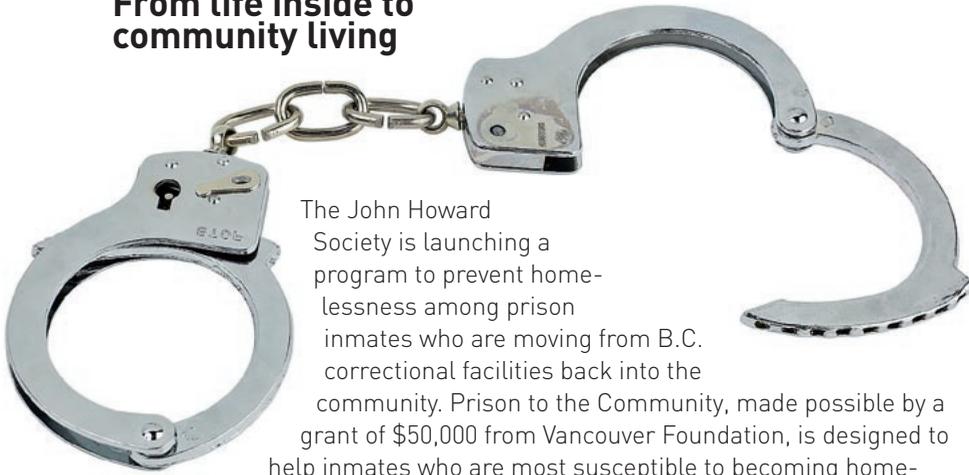
In 2002, the Xeni Gwet'in First Nation declared the area the Elegesi Qiyus Wild Horse Preserve, but the horses roam beyond the boundaries, where they sometimes come under fire from ranchers or are captured.

Unlike other wildlife, they are not protected under Canadian law.

Vancouver Foundation granted \$20,700 to the Valhalla Wilderness Society's Wild Horse Preservation Project, to raise public awareness about the horses and their ecosystem. The project will work with local First Nation communities and the public to improve the stewardship of wild horses and wildlife, and protect their lands, so that the wild horses of the Chilcotin continue to run free for many years to come.

Here are a few of the projects Vancouver Foundation recently supported

From life inside to community living



The John Howard Society is launching a program to prevent homelessness among prison inmates who are moving from B.C. correctional facilities back into the community. Prison to the Community, made possible by a grant of \$50,000 from Vancouver Foundation, is designed to help inmates who are most susceptible to becoming homeless find and retain suitable housing. The society's goal is to offer continuous support and community outreach services to inmates in transition, and to those already on parole in the community. Programs and services offered will be connected to individuals based on their needs.

Offenders involved in the program will have several options for housing support, including emergency shelter beds, safe transitional housing and long-term housing.

Grass growing into gardens

The Cowichan Valley Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association and Cowichan Green Community will develop three community gardens, and encourage members of the island community to transform grassland into fruitful and sustainable vegetable gardens.

One of the gardens will be for CMHA's Warmland House – a home that will have 15 emergency shelter beds and 24 transitional apartments, as well as common space for neighbourhood residents. The garden will provide food for the Warmland House kitchen, and for the neighbourhood. There will also be meeting space available for skill-building workshops on basic gardening, composting, preserving food and attracting beneficial insects – all of which may lead to greater employment opportunities. Vancouver Foundation granted \$80,000 over two years to the project.

Kickin' it soccer-style



Soccer is the fastest-growing team sport for boys and girls in North America. We know the benefits of involving children in sport are significant – learning co-operation, team building, healthy living and self-confidence. But many who live in low-income areas don't have access to sporting opportunities or qualified coaches who can help them improve their skills.

The National Sport Trust Fund's Kickin' Soccer in School program brings qualified soccer coaches to B.C. elementary schools to teach kids about the game. The

program aims to increase access to sport through schools, encourage inclusion within diverse areas and further promote the growth of this popular sport by having coaches train teachers.

The program has expanded to more than 50 schools, involving 285 teachers and 9,000 students. Vancouver Foundation donated \$35,000 toward the Kickin' Soccer in School program in 2008.



A many-storied site

Xà:ytem is an 18-acre National Historic Site near the Fraser River in Mission, B.C. that was once home to the Stó:lo people. Archaeologists from the University of British Columbia and the Stó:lo Nation have uncovered the remains of an ancient dwelling on the site, and collected thousands of artifacts dating back more than 9,000 years.

At Xà:ytem, the "People of the River" share their history and culture, telling visitors of the ancient house older than the pyramids, sharing stories – like the one about three Chiefs who were turned to stone – and passing on knowledge of the people who have lived on the site for more than 500 generations.

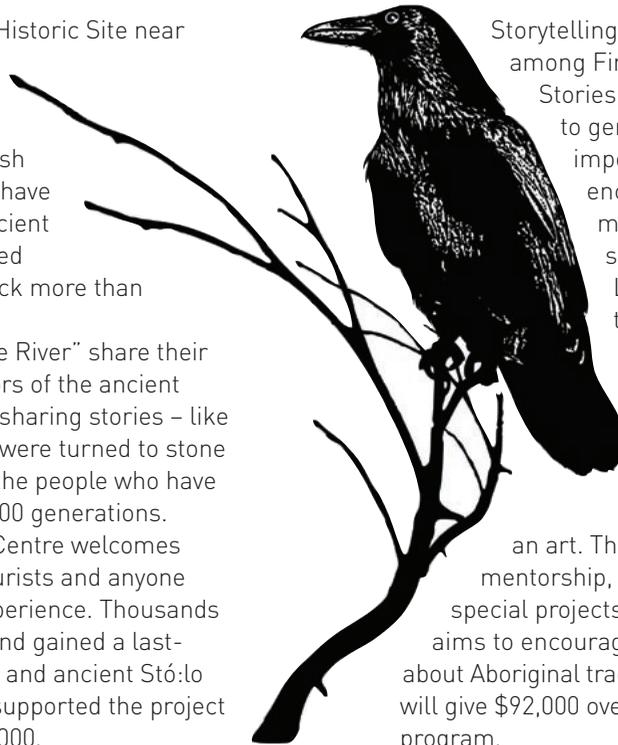
The Longhouse Interpretive Centre welcomes school tours, private parties, tourists and anyone looking for a unique cultural experience. Thousands of visitors have toured the site and gained a lasting impression of contemporary and ancient Stó:lo culture. Vancouver Foundation supported the project with a three-year grant of \$100,000.

Storytellers in the house

Storytelling has long been a tradition among First Nations communities.

Stories pass down from generation to generation. To support this important tradition, and to encourage the Aboriginal community to help shape library services, the Vancouver Public Library Foundation created the First Nations Storyteller in Residence project.

An individual storyteller will be selected for a four-month residency at the Vancouver Public Library to promote storytelling as an art. The program, which will involve mentorship, public story-sharing and special projects with seniors and youth, aims to encourage literacy and learning about Aboriginal traditions. Vancouver Foundation will give \$92,000 over three years to support this program.



High-tech senior service

George Burns once said, "Look to the future, because that's where you'll spend the rest of your life." The Burnaby Community Connections Society is looking to the future by using computer technology to help seniors with age-old problems. The society has developed a database that matches seniors with resources to address issues such as literacy, physical mobility limitations and transportation – even fear of technology itself. The system allows for extensive follow-up and evaluation of service quality. Vancouver Foundation provided a grant of \$90,000 over three years to support the program.



Très BELLE

When society looks down on what you do, it's hard to find something to feel good about. The isolation and stigma of working as a prostitute in the Downtown Eastside can make women less likely to access services, report violence or seek protection.

BELLE, which stands for "beautiful, experiential, life links to empowerment," is trying to help prostitutes discover their potential, and tap into inspiration that comes from supportive peers.

Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation, BELLE will use an asset-mapping program to help women develop positive self-awareness by identifying their strengths and transferable skills. Created by the Prostitution Alternatives Counseling and Education Society, the program will help the women set goals and work towards them. Two peer-support workers will provide guidance at meetings in a safe, confidential environment that fosters a sense of community and friendship. **VF**

The story of the DORY

A 30-year-old grant is still giving back to the community

STORY AND PHOTOS: KIMBERLEY FEHR

In 1978, high school science teacher Rod MacVicar received a \$4,150 grant from Vancouver Foundation to buy a 25-foot aluminum dory. He christened it the Medusa 2 and used it to launch a marine education program for students.

“At the time, I was hoping to make a big difference in students’ lives,” says

MacVicar. “I think I almost ignored the small daily differences we can make. Over time I have begun to realize that these small differences can add up to big differences, which I did not foresee.”

Thirty years later, his program, the Marine Educational Services Association (MEDUSA), and the Medusa 2 are still

taking students out on the waters of Port Moody Inlet. Thousands of young people have reached over the edge of the boat to touch the ocean, seen harbour seals in their natural environment and learned how fragile the ocean can be. The Medusa 2 has fought fires, cleaned up oil spills, conducted research, restored



habitat and starred in countless documentary films – and it's still going strong.

"Boy, you name it, the boat's done it," says MacVicar. "It's always on the go. It's had an interesting life."

The boat and MacVicar have influenced many lives. MacVicar was a teacher at Centennial School for many years and was instrumental in designing the curriculum for Wildlife of B.C. 11 and Fish and Wildlife 12 high school courses. Many students he took out on the water have gone on to pursue further education in sciences. One former student is even doing her master's in science at UBC with a focus on plankton.

Another former student, Melanie Mattson, followed in MacVicar's footsteps, taking over those classes at Centennial School after he retired. When she was a student there, MacVicar got her involved in another one of his 30-year projects: the Mossom Creek Hatchery, which he started with his colleague Ruth Foster. While volunteering, Mattson took her first ride on the

Medusa 2 in 1988, transporting salmon fry from the hatchery to a sea pen on the water, where the fry can adapt to the ocean environment.

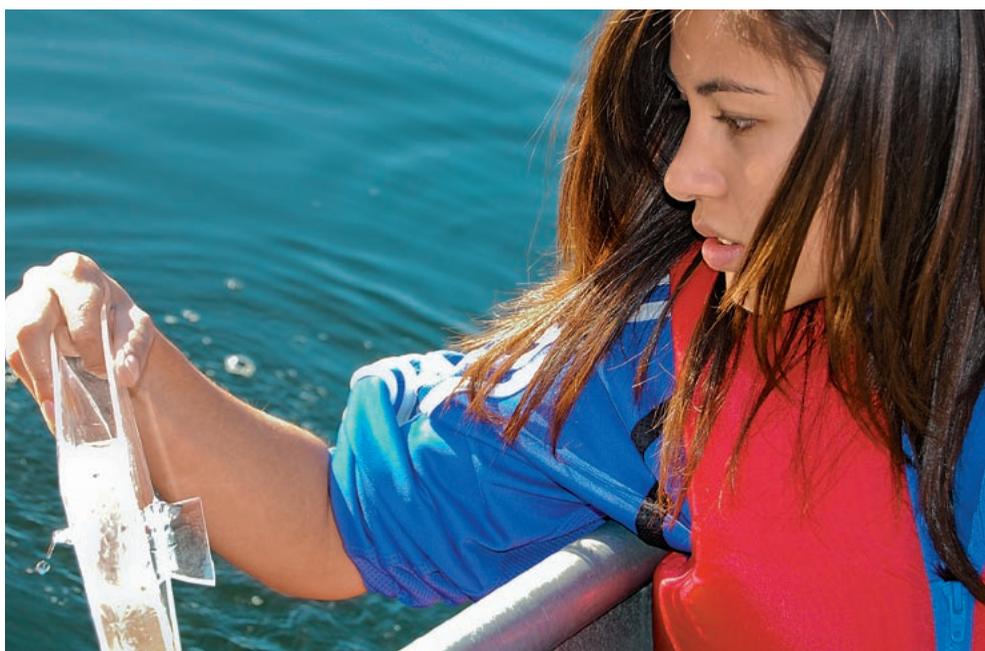
"I've never stopped going out on the boat. I'm still going on it and I have a life-long connection with the hatchery," says Mattson. "My students love going out on the water."

Today she brought her classes from Centennial to MacVicar's sea school. Armed with notepads and quiet fascination, the teenagers don orange life jackets for a turn on the Medusa 2. They reach over the boat to capture water and specimens with their plastic viewing chambers while MacVicar runs a tow in the water to catch live specimens in a bucket and distribute them to the students.

Like a magician, he plucks a sea-grape – a perfectly clear, crystalline creature – out of the muck in the bucket and places it in a student's hand like a treasure, just one of many mysteries students can discover on the water.

"It's difficult to care about the ocean if you don't know it has anything in it," he says. "If you think it's just crystal-clear water, then you don't mind dumping your sink, throwing waste into the ocean. Creating awareness of what's there is probably the first step in starting to care for it."

Boating is prohibitively expensive, he adds. "If it wasn't for the funding we had from Vancouver Foundation, we couldn't afford to do this. Charter boats cost thousands of dollars an hour, so it's not an option to take kids out on those. And they're not equipped for dragging nets and getting wet and dirty and putting life jackets on the kids, and having them get their hands in the water. This cuts the price down to a manageable level. That one investment 30 years ago has created a legacy that is still inspiring young people to participate, get involved, ask questions, learn more, do more and become more. It has paid itself back a thousand times to the community." **VF**



Left: Students get ready for an educational exploration in Port Moody Inlet aboard the Medusa 2, an aluminum dory paid for 30 years ago by a grant to the Marine Educational Services Association (MEDUSA) from Vancouver Foundation.

Above: Kianna Leung examines a water sample as part of a program aboard the Medusa 2.

VYSO Amy Dundas Head Memorial Fund



The Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra gives young musicians like Caitlin Wood the opportunity to play the great musical works.

The music plays on

Memorial fund helps Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra musicians realize their dreams

By KIMBERLEY FEHR

PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

Wherever Amy Dundas Head went, she brought the music with her. Her violin was her constant companion at family gatherings, show-jumping competitions and Christmas carolling – even at her own wedding.

“She wanted to share music with whomever she met, whatever their interests were,” recalls her father Tim Dundas. Amy, a vibrant blonde with an open smile, would diverge from her classical background into the music of the moment, jamming with jazz or Gaelic tunes – whatever people wanted to play – because for her it was about sharing.

Amy was frequently on the road at show-jumping competitions, climbing the Canadian rankings with her eye on the international circuit. Based at her family’s farm near Kamloops

where she bred horses, she won numerous professional events throughout Western Canada. She also excelled at the “kur”

competition, a dressage event where horse and rider perform a sort of musical ballet.

Her father

recalls her spending hours selecting and editing music for these performances.

In the midst of all these dreams, Amy died suddenly and tragically at 30 years old, in a stable accident – doing what she loved. She had been married to her husband, Keith Head, for less than a year.

It was such a great loss. Amy’s mother-in-law, Alice Smith, didn’t want to lose the music too. It was a passion the young couple had shared, and a passion Smith wanted to honour. After consulting with Head and Dundas, she established a memorial fund in Amy’s name to support a deserving player in the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra, where Amy’s exuberance and encouragement had made her a role model.

Music was, after all, Amy’s first love. At age four, she started playing the violin with the Suzuki Program. There were Kiwanis Music Festivals, and busking on Granville Island, and then, at 14, she joined the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra, playing in the first violin section for four years. When she was 17, Amy won the concerto competition, and on her birthday played as the soloist in the Bruch G minor violin concerto. »



Conor Stuart (left) and fellow VYSO member Kevin Kang.



Amy Dundas Head with her horse Fanny.

She fit in with the youth orchestra the way she fit in life, relating to members and teachers of all ages with her bubbly, upbeat persona. While she was studying music at UBC, her career was cut short by a repetitive strain injury, but she never stopped playing. “This fund helps to keep things going that Amy would have liked to continue doing,” says Dundas, “and to some extent it mitigates the loss to know that her desires and ambitions are living on in others.”

Because the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra held its endowment fund at Vancouver Foundation, it seemed natural to establish the Amy Dundas Head Memorial Fund there as well. “Vancouver Foundation has shown interest and kept in touch. We were able to meet with the staff personally in Vancouver and talk about Amy and get the fund established,” says Dundas.

Mark Sachs, past president of the Vancouver Youth Symphony Orchestra and a Vancouver lawyer, says Vancouver Foundation is a great concept – pooling resources for charities and managing the funds under one roof. “Compared to our other fund that we have at a bank, the Vancouver Foundation management fee is very low,” he says.

A few years ago, Sachs adds, the orchestra found itself in financial difficulty. One thing compounded another – a tour went over budget, a government grant didn’t come through – so they turned to their membership, asking those who could contribute to pay in. They raised what they needed to get out of the hole, and launched a campaign to get their funding in better order, with help from one of the parents – Ross Beaty – who led the campaign with great success.

Over two years their endowment grew from \$200,000 to \$1 million as of 2006, thanks to some money magic from the B.C. Arts Renaissance Fund, which Vancouver Foundation also managed. Created by the provincial government with a \$25-million gift, the B.C. Arts Renaissance Fund matched the money raised by the orchestra, effectively doubling fundraising efforts. “It did provide a wonderful boost to our funds,” says Sachs. “Now, that’s one-sixth of operating funding that we don’t have to ask for. And we are less reliant on grant programs.”

With their fund sitting at about \$1.3 million, it takes the pressure off so they can concentrate on their *raison d’être* – developing and nurturing young orchestral talent.

Based at St. James Community Square in Kitsilano in part of an old church complex, the orchestra offers four levels for different abilities and ages, from eight to 22 years. “From the kid’s point of view, it’s great to have the opportunity to play with other musicians after many years of solitary practice wondering



what it's all for. And they always get revved up for the performances," says Sachs.

For young musicians like 19-year-old violinist Conor Stuart, the orchestra was a place where he made some of his best friends. Having joined at age seven, he is one of the orchestra's longest-serving members.

"Playing in the orchestra is a completely different musical experience, a completely different way of listening," he says. "Just trying to contribute to what everyone around you is playing – it is a collaborative effort with everybody working towards the same thing."

The orchestra allows him to play music he can't play alone. "It gives us the opportunity to play many of these great musical works," he says. "Playing them, you begin to appreciate how everything works, why they sound so compelling, why these pieces are so enduring. You notice so much more about the music than when you are just listening."

In an ideal world, Stuart would make his living as a composer – he's in his third year of music composition at UBC with a solid backup plan: a dual degree in civil engineering, which means a total of eight years of school.

So every little bit helps. In 2007, he received over \$600 from the Amy Dundas Head Memorial Fund, an award that goes to a senior orchestra string player with musical proficiency and a character reminiscent of Amy – a role model



Roger Cole directing the VYSO at St. James Community Square.

who inspires and encourages others. "As a composer or as a performer, I just want to keep the music going in my life," says Stuart.

The music, the notes, the melodies, the symphonies – that's the dream of young musicians. Amy had to give up her musical career, but her violin was a part of her, and the music flowed on through her life, in the people she touched, the songs she shared and the joy that travelled with her wherever she went.

Her life ended far too soon, but the music plays on, in her memory. **VF**

To find out more about the Amy Dundas Head Memorial Fund, contact Kim McPhee of Vancouver Foundation at 604-688-2204. To donate online, visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca and click Donate Now.

Nanaimo Clemente Program participant Paul takes a break before heading into class to study Aristotle.

Plato in da 'hood

STORY AND PHOTOS: PAUL HERATY



Nanaimo's south end is a neighbourhood in transition, caught between the high-density development of downtown, the glitz of a waterfront conference centre that looks to the future and low-slung industrial buildings that look back into the city's resource-based past.

The Princess Royal Family Centre is a small patch of colour and noise on an otherwise gritty, monochromatic day. Children play outside on a candy-coloured jungle gym next to a patch of green grass. Their playful shouts hang in the air.

A steady stream of people pours through the doors of this former 1950s schoolhouse. Now a drop-in centre for public health nursing and the community, the family centre is a hub around which a huge social network of people and programs spin.

Inside, a wall of brochures and rack cards advertises every conceivable family program. Colourful posters offer immunization clinics,

addiction resources, nursing support and workshops on dental health, nutrition and postpartum depression. A whiteboard proclaims, "Clemente Program 12:30-2:30 p.m." It's early yet, and a peek inside the classroom reveals a solitary mom quietly breastfeeding her baby.

Outside, two men are smoking. They're taking a break before their class begins (and giving mom some privacy). They drag deeply.

You'd be hard-pressed to find two more distinct personalities, or two more unlikely friends, than these two. Doug is 48. He grew up in Nanoose Bay, and "pulled the pin" on school in Grade 10, trading the classroom for the rough-and-tumble life of logging camps. A carpenter, fisherman and logger, he made a lot of money in B.C.'s resource industries. Enough to buy a Harley and pay cash for his own house at 22 years old. Enough to get married, and divorced. Unfortunately not enough to support a voracious drug habit.

Doug doesn't mention that time much (he's been clean for two years). Or perhaps he forgets – it's understandable – a head injury from a motorcycle accident in 1993 changed his life completely. He is self-deprecating, speaks with disarming candour and is fiercely committed to regaining the function and parts of his life that he lost 16 years ago.

Paul is 41. He's wry, cynical and laughs easily. A former child prodigy from Ontario, he's a fine arts graduate, an award-winning carver and a Celtic harp maker. He also struggled in school, but for different reasons than Doug.

"In the educational system at the time they didn't know quite what to do with people like me," he says. "I'd finish all my courses in the first month. I was extraordinarily bored in school." Paul is charming, extremely articulate and solitary.

Doug and Paul are both part of a revolutionary program that is teaching literature,

philosophy and art history to people at risk of homelessness, physical and mental illness and addiction. American journalist Earl Shorris started the Clemente Program in 1995. Shorris developed a college-level course for non-traditional adult learners, in the belief that the humanities are key to fostering citizenship. Vancouver Foundation is one of the principal sponsors of the Clemente Program in Nanaimo, along with Vancouver Island University and the Nanaimo Youth Services Association. In 2008, the Foundation provided a grant of almost \$62,000 to help fund the program.

Support for the Nanaimo Clemente Program comes from Vancouver Foundation's Community Impact Fund, which allows donors to direct their gifts to the most pressing community needs, and to support innovative projects. The Foundation works closely with volunteer community advisers – experts in their field who know the emerging trends and needs – to ensure gifts for the Community Impact Fund are targeted effectively and make a lasting impact in the community.

Clemente Program participants get together twice a week to read and discuss such matters as the philosophical questions raised by Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. They study Rousseau and Homer. They're taught by experts in the field, and can get university credit if they pass. Heady stuff for the students, many of whom never made it past Grade 10.

They also get a meal before each class, and bus fare if they need it. Child care is available. Books are paid for by the program, and the students get free tickets to a variety of local artistic events, such as dance, music and theatre performances, and gallery openings.

The second class of the Nanaimo Clemente Program ended April 3 with a small ceremony at VIU. All of the students graduated with a certificate of participation, and most got university credit for the fall and spring terms. Classes begin again in September 2009.

Mark Blackell, professor of liberal studies and political science at VIU, and academic coordinator for the Nanaimo Clemente Program, is sold on the inherent benefits of studying literature and philosophy, but credits the students for the progress they've made.

"The program doesn't always work for everybody," he says. "You have to find the right people.... But when it does, it works for two reasons: first, the community that develops between the people in the classroom. And second, in students who are open to it, the course creates an intellectual excitement and intellectual courage.

"Many of our students have mental health issues, and occasionally they struggle with those.... It takes a lot of courage for some participants to come to class. It takes courage to crack open a book, to read it and think about it, and courage to come and speak, and listen to others."

Blackell recalls one former student who said, "A good day is when I can get out of bed. I drag myself to the Clemente course, and I always feel better afterwards. I feel intellectually alive. I walk away and I'm thinking about ideas."

read a lot ... I'm not totally on-topic all the time. I wander a little, but my family is happy that I'm doing something and asking what I'm going to do next."

Paul adds, "I think a course like this is absolutely critical for our society... we are sliding into the abyss of reality shows; of poor dialogue, poor interactions. I think we're doomed if we let that happen. You end up with a culture that encourages going shopping to fill a personal void. The mall is the new church. People are looking for something; something spiritual. Call it science or faith or technology or spirituality – they're looking for something."

He grits his teeth, the struggle to find the right words evident on his face. "It's a fall from intellectual grace. Education can fill that void. As long as we question; as long as we have the tools to question, that's the most important thing." He trails off, lost in thought.



Mark Blackell (left) and the Nanaimo Clemente Program class of 2009.

It's ideas that brought Doug and Paul, along with eight others, to the Princess Royal Family Centre. It's ideas they share over a cigarette and a cup of coffee. They always come an hour early, to set up the tables in the classroom, have a smoke and chat.

For Doug, the benefits of the Clemente Program are concrete. "I'm speaking better because of this course," he says. "After my accident I couldn't say a whole sentence without stuttering. I couldn't remember things. I couldn't read or write properly, because by the time I finished the sentence I couldn't remember the first word. Now I

There's no bell; no blaring announcement over a PA system, but Paul and Doug seem to know it's time to go set up the tables. They head inside to prepare for class and the discussion of the day. Mom and baby are gone. Tables and chairs are pushed into place. Plato is waiting. **VF**

To find out more about the Community Impact Fund at Vancouver Foundation, visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca or call 604-688-2204. To find out more about the Nanaimo Clemente program, contact Mark Blackell at mark.blackell@viu.ca.



Spotlighting charity

Shaw Communications
gives more than just dollars

By ANDREA MAJORKI

It's been 60 years since William Anstis, class president, graduated from Kitsilano Secondary School. Today he's back with 46 of his classmates to revisit the old halls.

During the visit – part of their high school reunion celebrations – they sing “Hail Kitsilano,” the school song, with current students, and reminisce about football rallies and past dances. On hand is Shaw TV reporter Bianca Solterbeck and cameraman Scott Burbank. Solterbeck walks through the school with Anstis and his former classmates, capturing conversations about Nat King Cole, Babe Ruth and how the school curriculum has changed. She also captures the Class of '48 proudly discussing a new fund – started with \$10,000 they've raised through pledges and donations – that will provide post-secondary financial assistance to graduates who make exceptional contributions to the school. Vancouver Foundation will administer the new Kitsilano Secondary School Alumni Scholarship Fund.

Solterbeck's visit is part of Shaw TV's commitment to profile community stories, and in particular, local charities and philanthropists. In partnership with Vancouver Foundation, the company created a program called *Vancouver Foundation Presents* to air weekly stories on philanthropy during *The Express*, a Shaw TV lifestyle show

that features interesting people, local events, recreation and attractions in metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

For decades, Shaw Communications has been donating millions of dollars to charitable organizations and causes that support children, education and many other special community initiatives. The company also makes charitable grants to organizations where its employees volunteer.

In addition to contributing money, Shaw Communications uses the heart of its business – television – to highlight the work of donors and charities across B.C. Michael Herringer, Shaw's Manager of Programming, says one of his goals for the program is to “to shine the spotlight on the people and organizations that contribute positively to our community each and every day. Vancouver Foundation's relationship with thousands of charities and donors makes it easier for us to find the most compelling stories.”

By tapping into the Foundation's networks since 2005, Shaw TV has showcased more than 200 non-profits and donors. Solterbeck and her crew go out into the community to interview and film philanthropists doing good things, volunteers giving their time, animals being cared for and people whose lives have been touched by a charitable organization.

Some of the featured organizations are

large and well known, such as the Vancouver Art Gallery and David Suzuki Foundation. Most are smaller, but are still doing important and interesting work for communities that the public rarely hears about. With Shaw TV's generous donation of airtime, non-profit groups are able to share their stories with thousands of viewers – raising awareness of issues and projects that keep communities vibrant and healthy.

Through this partnership, organizations not only get a spot on *The Express*, they also get a copy of their feature to use on their websites or share with donors. Vancouver Foundation also posts the vignettes on its website to ensure the stories continue to be heard.

While filming, Solterbeck and her crew catch a pledge to the scholarship fund on camera. Mathew Madsen, current Kitsilano class president, says he and his graduating class will contribute to the Kitsilano Secondary School Alumni Scholarship Fund at their 60th high school reunion. And you can bet Vancouver Foundation will be there to check in on that commitment. **VF**

To watch any of the 200 videos from *Vancouver Foundation Presents*, visit: www.vancouverfoundation.ca/stories. For more information on Shaw TV, visit: www.shaw.ca.

Denys Miroshnychenko shows off his favourite model – a gold Lamborghini.

Model students

South Burnaby kids are churning out a virtual production line of mini-vehicles, thanks to a small grant and a gifted volunteer

BY CATHERINE CLEMENT
PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

“The classroom was so quiet that community centre staff kept peeking in. They thought the kids may have lost interest in my workshop and gone home.”

This is the way Doug Harder describes the first model-building workshop he offered for free to kids living in the South Burnaby neighbourhood of Edmonds. The neighbourhood, which is socially and culturally diverse, includes a large proportion of low-income families and recent immigrants struggling to get established in their new country.

“Many people doubted whether these kids had the interest or ability to concentrate long enough to build model cars,” says the folksy, white-haired Harder, who himself learned to build model cars when he was a teen.

Harder, who volunteers his time to teach the model-building workshops, knew it would be an uphill battle to get kids interested. In an age of fast-paced video games, his slower art of reading

instructions, assembling, gluing and painting seemed like it might not be an attractive offering.

“But I knew kids would have a sense of accomplishment if they built a model. When a video game is over, it’s over. But when a model-building workshop is over, you walk away with something that you built,” he says.

So he decided to offer the workshops for free, including the model kits, which each kid would be allowed to keep.

“The Eastburn Community Centre was very supportive of my idea and provided the workshop space,” says Harder. “And for that first workshop I went

around the neighbourhood to try to raise funds, and also encourage people to donate any model car kits or supplies they may not want.”

For his first workshop, nine kids showed up, including one girl. Word got around, and by the following workshop, attendance had doubled. Today, Harder’s popular Saturday courses, which he holds about five times a year, attract up to 30 kids at a time. About a third of the students are girls. And now even parents attend and help out.

“I think it is nice to see how parents are getting involved in this,” says Harder. »





Denys works on his latest model with help from volunteer Doug Harder.

With some pride he shares the story of a family whose two older kids attended a couple of workshops. Eventually, the youngest child also joined the class. Some time later Harder heard from the mother about how model making brought the family together.

“The father was watching his kids making models, and decided to make one of his own. Then the mother, seeing how much fun everyone was having, bought her own kit. Now, after dinner, the family clears away the dishes, spreads out the newspapers to protect the dining room table, and each person works on their own model.”

Some of the kids Harder has taught have gone on to become model-building fanatics. Denys Miroshnychenko, whose parents emigrated from the Ukraine a few years ago, is a case in point. He’s a virtual model car production line.

The articulate and serious 11-year-old came to one of Harder’s first model-making courses, and has attended every workshop since. To date, he has assembled almost 30 cars, and also has a collection of model airplanes that hang from his bedroom ceiling.

“My favourite car is the gold Lamborghini,” Denys says, grinning, as his little hands hold it up for everyone to admire.

When asked what he likes about making model cars, Denys considers the question for a moment, and then replies, “I like model making because it gets me thinking. It is sort of like yoga in that way.”

Another kid from the workshop stopped doing graffiti, and instead took a part-time job so that he could make money to buy his own model cars.

Harder has found other sources of financial support for his workshop. One such source is Vancouver Foundation’s Neighbourhood Small Grants program.

The program, which started in 1999, supports resident-led initiatives that enhance local neighbourhoods. Grants can be up to \$500, and are evaluated and administered at the community level: 11 community organizations in five different neighbourhoods in metro Vancouver review the proposals.

Hundreds of projects have received funding over the last 10 years. The projects range from activities such as Harder’s model-making workshop to neighbourhood gatherings, community gardens, lantern parades, knitting circles and Chinese brush painting for seniors from different cultural backgrounds.

“Neighbourhood Small Grants demonstrate that small amounts of money can make a world of difference,” says

Lidia Kemeny, Vancouver Foundation’s program director for Neighbourhood Small Grants. “What impresses me is that even a grant of \$500 can touch so many lives. It is remarkable.”

Kemeny notes the program is funded by Vancouver Foundation donors.

“Our donors understand that strong communities need to be strengthened from the ground up, and that means starting at the neighbourhood level,” she says. “Of course, we would like to fund more of these neighbourhood projects, like the model-building workshops for kids. But the Foundation has been impacted by the economic downturn,” she says. “We hope that as people hear about the benefits of the Neighbourhood Small Grants program, they will be interested in supporting it.”

For Harder and Denys, the benefits are clear. After all, each workshop introduces more kids to a rite of passage from another era: the craft of patiently building a car or plane or boat that they can keep and proudly display for the rest of their lives. **VF**

To find out more about Neighbourhood Small Grants, or to donate, visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca or call 604-688-2204.

Men, babies and books

Vancouver Public Library program gets
dads involved from the start

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR

PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

Eighteen-month-old Solana takes a break from teaching dad how to sing nursery rhymes.

The atmosphere verges on tribal. A group of 30-something men walk in a small circle swinging their babies gently as they sing softly, “Zoom, zoom, zoom, we’re going to the moon.” Then there’s a countdown: “Five, four, three, two, one – blast off!” The men lift the babies to the ceiling and there are smiles all around. It’s so much fun they decide to do it all over again.

Welcome to Man in the Moon, a baby-dad bonding program run by Vancouver Public Library and sponsored by Vancouver Foundation. Named after a nursery rhyme, the program offers songs and stories for the very young and the men who love them. The class gathers for an hour once a week in the children’s section of the Marpole Branch to hone rhymes, sing songs and bond. The benefits go far beyond the joy of rhyming: strong parental bonds, seeds of literacy that last a lifetime and a chance

for new dads to swap child-rearing strategies.

Program leader Jon Scop, a children’s librarian, whispers conspiratorially, “Believe it or not, it’s still viewed as sort of strange for dads to be involved. It’s a good thing, but it’s still a new thing. These guys, I don’t want to tell them this, but they’re pioneers.... Hopefully it gets to the point where it’s not looked at as an oddity.”

A discussion during a break in the program laments the lack of positive father role models in our society.

“Society and the media don’t really portray the father well,” says Andrew, here today with his daughter Justine. “There’s Homer Simpson. The dad’s the butt of the joke or the bumbling idiot waiting for mom to swoop in and fix things. I think it’s positive that there are other fathers being involved in their kids’ lives. It’s very different from the previous generation, where it



Solana and dad David enjoy a Man in the Moon moment.

was a lot more hands-off and the expectation was the women would be responsible for taking care of all things household and family.”

Vancouver Public Library launched Man in the Moon to fill a vital niche. In regular parent-child programs, dads are often the odd man out in a room full of moms. Man in the Moon provides a place just for them, where it’s safe to be silly.

David, here today with his one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Solana, says, “If you miss a week, it feels like you’ve missed out on something. We get together in a circle, we share stories, we talk about things in the break. We get to see the other kids grow. When dads come with their baby for the first session, they’re scared. They don’t even know how to calm the baby down without mom; you see fear on their faces; ‘I’m alone with this child.’ And you see how far they’ve come at the end of the session and it’s great.”

He admits he didn’t have a choice when he first came – Man in the Moon was legislated by his wife. The first day he was a little apprehensive about chiming in, but then he became an addict. Expanding his limited repertoire of nursery rhymes doesn’t hurt either, especially when it comes time to put Solana to bed.

“The little rhymes we can sing with her and finger-plays are great,” says David. “It’s good for me because I was kind of lost when it came to what to do next. There’s methodology behind it. It’s a lot more than just reading words out of the book. You’re using voices; you’re actually getting them involved.”

And the tips he has learned from the other dads have been helpful in getting Solana to sleep through the night without her wanting to feed three or four times, and getting her out of mom and dad’s bedroom.

Man in the Moon is offered in 10

locations, including eight Vancouver Public Library branches and two community neighbourhood houses. Program sessions run from eight to 10 weeks. Last year Vancouver Foundation awarded the Vancouver Public Library Foundation a \$50,000 grant to expand the program and to research offering it in other languages, such as Cantonese.

Children absorb so much in the first few months and years, says Brenda van Engelen, executive director of the library’s foundation. “Speaking and singing and talking to your baby is so important,” she says. “Oral literacy is the first step towards literacy. And Man in the Moon is a conscious effort to connect the male caregiver with the important role of being a teacher and role model in their child’s life.” **VF**

To find out more about Man in the Moon, call 604-331-3740 or visit: www.vpl.ca.

A debt of gratitude

Couple creates a fund to give on into the future

STORY AND PHOTO: PAUL HERATY

“I hate debt.” Art Kelm’s jaw sets and his voice takes on an uncharacteristically hard edge. Then he shakes his head, and laughs. “I guess that’s the accountant in me. But it’s also a product of my upbringing.”

Two instances of debt have shaped Kelm’s life. The first occurred when he was a young boy in Winnipeg in the 1930s. “My father ... came to Canada from Poland with nothing, and started to build a life here,” says Kelm. “I guess the lowest point in our lives as a family came when, for a while, my father couldn’t find work. So my mother worked in a laundry cleaning hospital sheets. And then she lost her job. We had nothing.

“So my father had to go to the City of Winnipeg welfare [department] to get a truckload of coal delivered to our house. That just about broke his spirit, having to do that. He later discovered there was a lien against his house for the welfare. As soon as he was able to, he discharged the debt.”

The second time Kelm was 22. It was 1954, and he had just graduated from university as a chartered accountant. He and two friends had a dream to travel for a year and see the world. But the cost was too high.

Kelm put his dream trip on hold and instead borrowed a little money from his father and opened a small accounting practice. He soon repaid his father. The firm grew steadily over the years, eventually merging with partners, and he started dabbling in investments – bonds at first; government bonds, compound bonds. Nothing fancy. Then equities and bank stocks. Soon he was investing money for his entire family. Year after year, his portfolio grew, just like his accounting practice.

Kelm had started his personal stock purchases with a moderate investment in one bank stock in 1991 and another in 1997, then he “just kind of forgot about them.” Before the recent downturn, with reinvested dividends the stocks were worth eight times his original investment.

Now 76, Kelm is still dabbling in the markets. But he decided to put the money in those two original stocks to good use. “I thought charity should get some of this,” says Kelm, who says he feels strongly that donors should support their communities and already gives to the Salvation Army, the United Way, St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation and Christ Church Cathedral. “Fortunately the accumulated value of the stock was enough to

help the four or five charities Mary and I already donate to, but do it in perpetuity. I was thinking, how am I going to do this? And that’s when I found out about Vancouver Foundation.”

Kelm and his wife – retired physician Mary Lewis – spoke with Lisa Pullan, vice-president of donor and development services at Vancouver Foundation. Together they created a new type of deferred fund, which they christened a “legacy fund.”

By making an investment of \$1,000 now and putting their wishes for exactly where they want the money from those securities to go in a letter to Vancouver Foundation, the couple is essentially creating a fund and putting it on hold. Pullan says a legacy fund allows you to discuss and shape the terms of your future gift during your lifetime. It formalizes a relationship with the Foundation, and still offers a lot of flexibility.

Should their wishes change in a year or two or 10, all that’s required is a new letter of wishes

to the Foundation. If they’d written the same instructions in their wills, the changes would have to be made by a lawyer, which would take time and money. “This gets rid of such a lot of uncertainty and such a lot of paperwork. It seemed to be the ideal situation, for Mary and me anyway,” says Kelm.

The fund will also give them a chance to discharge debt. Kelm and his wife are both active members of Christ Church Cathedral, which recently underwent an extensive restoration and renewal. “They did a beautiful job of fixing it up,” says Kelm. “But we wound up \$1 million short. That debt still bothers me.” He designated a portion of his legacy fund to go specifically toward the retirement of that debt.

Kelm is glad to have an opportunity to show gratitude for his good fortune. After all, a debt of gratitude is often the sweetest to repay.

Kelm himself won’t be going into debt anytime soon. He still enjoys working on his stock portfolio, though he’s not so happy about the recent economic downturn, which has cut into the value of the stocks he is donating. But he’s hopeful they’ll recover to what he originally intended. “I’ve been through market corrections before, but this is going to take some time to get over,” he says.

And he did finally make his trip around the world, though not all in one go, and with his wife instead of his friend. He had to wait 36 years to do it, but he did it in style – and without going into debt. **VF**



Art Kelm and Mary Lewis relax at home with their dog Simon.

Ramped up and a deck

BY DOROTHY BARTOSZEWSKI PHOTO: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

Playing on his family's rotten, splintery

deck was a problem for Matteus Preusse, who has spina bifida, and a nightmare for his mother, Celia. His lower legs are paralyzed, and in those areas, he can't feel his skin – but that didn't stop the enthusiastic little guy from wanting to play outside like his older sister.

"He was two years old then, and he just loved being out on the deck. But his walker would get stuck because it was uneven," says Celia. "And when he crawled on it, because he can't feel his knees and his feet, he'd get all these splinters and cuts. Then, because of his nerve damage, those cuts would take forever to heal. But because he couldn't feel how he had hurt himself, telling him not to go out there didn't make any sense to him."

So the family had to be on perpetual alert – which didn't always work either. "Sometimes his sister would forget and leave the door open and out he'd go. And then I'd end up having to gouge out all these horrible splinters," says Celia.

The stairs to the house, located in Sechelt, were even more of a worry. "When Matteus first learned to walk he was using a walker with four wheels. If he ever got out that door, it could have been so dangerous for him. And we had to carry him up and down," she says. "It was awful, having so much frustration and inaccessibility right in our own home."

A grant from the Giving in Action Society enabled the Preusse family to replace the stairs with a ramp, and connect it to an upgraded deck, which they refinished with a smooth surface.

Vancouver Foundation established Giving in Action in 2006, when the provincial government contributed a total of \$40 million to the society – \$30 million to the Family Independence Fund (FIF) and \$10 million to the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund (CYSN).

The Province asked Vancouver Foundation to manage the granting associated with supporting B.C. families who have a member with a disability, to allow that family member

to live at home. The grants are for projects such as home renovations, and modifications or purchases of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

It's a unique model of working with government for effective giving. Vancouver Foundation provides infrastructure and grant-making expertise to distribute the money where it's needed most. Although both the FIF and CYSN funds are expected to be finished in 2010, Vancouver Foundation is hopeful the funding, and the partnership, will be renewed.

Since 2006, the Foundation, through Giving in Action's two funds, has provided \$15 million to children and youth in B.C. More than 200 children and their families throughout the province have received grants. The program has funded 110 home renovations, 135 vehicles and 10 projects related to safety.

The Preusse family's grant, and the subsequent deck renovation, have made an enormous difference in their life.

"Matteus just loves it, and there's no issue with him being out there," says Celia. "Wanting to get outside was a huge motivator for him in learning how to walk, and it was so great that we could just let him go. There are all these normal things we can do now which we just couldn't do before. Now we can leave the door open on a sunny day, and he can play outside with his sister... We can eat our meals out there. It seems like such a simple thing, but it has made such a difference. And we could never have afforded it on our own."

"Life would be so incredibly frustrating, for him and for us, if we hadn't got the help from Giving in Action. The great thing is, because he's so young, he's not going to know a time when his home was less accessible for him. He's just going to take all this accessibility for granted. And really, that's how it should be." **VF**

Check out YouTube for videos of Matteus and his family at www.youtube.com/watch?v=39Vffd8lBaA. For more information on Giving in Action, visit: www.givinginaction.ca or call toll free: 1-866-523-3157.



Matteus Preusse ramps up for spring on his family's new deck.

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A place to unpack

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR

Time was running out. Seventeen-year-old Vanessa (not her real name) had overstayed the limit at a temporary shelter in East Vancouver and her options were dwindling.

Vanessa had left home at 16, depressed and worn down by constant conflict with her eastern European parents. Abuse and impossible rules made leaving seem like the best choice at the time, but since then Vanessa had been in flux.

She stayed at group homes until she started receiving financial support from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Then she found an apartment downtown, but she couldn't afford the rent when school started. She moved back in with her parents, but only lasted 20 days. She went to a Burnaby rooming house with cheaper rent, but still attended school downtown. "I'd leave the house at 6 a.m. I'd get to school right before the bell rang at 8:30 – three buses and a SkyTrain," she says.

The rooming house owners gave her notice to make room for their relatives, and Vanessa went back to a group home, but she couldn't stay indefinitely.

"I was supposed to find a place, but I couldn't find any," she recalls. »



Safe, decent affordable housing – for everyone

Vancouver Foundation is supporting Streethome, a new organization with a unique approach to homelessness – raising private money to help buy housing units for people without homes.

“Vancouver Foundation believed in this venture when it was still but an idea on paper,” says Jake Kerr, Vancouver Foundation board chair. “We jumped at the chance to provide \$500,000 in seed funding to Streethome. It represented a new approach to an old problem and tied in well to the philosophy we have at Vancouver Foundation, which is that we all owe something back to our community.”

Streethome launched in February 2009, with the goal of providing access to safe, decent, affordable housing with support services for all homeless people in Vancouver. Streethome is the first broad community-based initiative designed to address homelessness in Vancouver, and its work brings together non-profits, community groups, businesses, governments and citizens.

The Province of British Columbia and City of Vancouver matched Vancouver Foundation's contribution. 

For more information, visit: www.streethome.org.

Enter the Broadway Youth Resource Centre, which was ready to try a novel approach to youth homelessness, thanks in part to an initial \$114,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative. Broadway Youth found a landlord willing to take a chance on their project – Amarvir Minhas – and signed the lease on a one-bedroom suite.

Broadway Youth sublet the apartment to Vanessa, set down some rules, helped her deal with the landlord and generally looked out for her well-being. She took one of the organization's courses on landlord-tenant issues, budgeting and life skills.

This approach worked so well that when other apartments became available, Minhas offered them to Broadway Youth. Now five of his eight suites are homes to youth from its supported-housing program.

“If those kids came to me on their own, I wouldn't rent to them because they are quite young,” says Minhas. “But because I know Broadway Youth Centre will take care of them, it's good for me. If there's a problem, I just call the youth worker at Broadway Youth and they deal with it. I don't have to worry about the tenant and the rent. And it's a big help for the kids too.”

With the average bachelor apartment in Vancouver going for \$736 a month, finding an affordable place to rent can be extraordinarily difficult for young people.

“They don't have references, they often don't present well, they don't know how to sell themselves to a landlord,” says Robert Wilmot, director of the Broadway Youth Resource Centre. “In a tight market a young person is competing with someone who is older, who has credit cards and employment. A landlord makes an assessment on appearances like anyone else and will choose someone with less risk.”

He adds, “We try to make it easy for the landlords. We find them tenants. If there's damage, we deal with it. It's a win-win-win: good for landlords, good for young people and good for us.”

And good for the community. In another round of Youth Homelessness Initiative grants, Vancouver Foundation committed an additional \$222,388 to this program to help it expand from 20 to 70 apartments.

“Homelessness is one issue that has not, until recently, received the support it required from our community,” says Faye

Wightman, Vancouver Foundation president and CEO. “For far too long, many of us sat back and let governments and social service agencies figure out what to do. But as homelessness has grown, we have all come to recognize that this is a community problem that requires the efforts and commitment of the entire community to solve.”

Vancouver Foundation focused on youth homelessness because young people aren't yet trapped in the cycle that usually comes with drugs and mental illness, and helping young people get their lives on track can prevent future homelessness. For example, the Watari Research Association is receiving \$330,000 from the Youth Homelessness Initiative over three years to help find housing for young mothers and pregnant women who are dealing with addictions and/or mental health issues.

Sometimes a little help at the right time can last a lifetime. Take Vanessa, for example. Housing support she received from the Broadway Youth Resource Centre came at a crucial point, helping her through her last two years of high school so she could graduate on time with her friends.

She has also “graduated” from Broadway Youth's housing program. Earlier this year, she moved out, and into an apartment with roommates. She is working full-time at a coffee shop and plans to study dental assisting.

Vanessa says if she hadn't received support from Broadway Youth, she doesn't think she could have focused on school as much. Back then it was a struggle, and little things could set her back. In Grade 11, for example, sometimes it was just not having enough bus money to get to class. She'd miss school, fall behind and wouldn't want to go, because it piled up. But she pulled herself together for Grade 12.

“I wanted to graduate really bad, not only because I wanted to prove to my parents that I could do it on my own, but so I could prove to myself that I did it,” she says. “It felt really amazing.” **VF**

For more information about Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative, contact Catharine Hume at 604-688-2204. For information on the Broadway Youth Resource Centre, contact Pacific Community Resources Society, which operates the centre, at www.pcrs.ca.

Catching a dream

By ANDREA MAJORKI
PHOTO: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

Shea Jim is standing on the pitcher's mound at Nat Bailey Stadium. At nine years old, she's almost lost in this huge field of green. The people in the stands, including her family, can barely pick her out.

She's calm, waiting.

It's July 31. The Vancouver Canadians are taking on the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes. And while most kids are standing in line to buy popcorn and corn dogs, Shea is about to throw the ceremonial first pitch.

She knows the importance of this long-standing ritual; that it's an honour often saved for someone who is (in her words) "famous or rich." But she's not nervous. As a pitcher for her baseball team in Burnaby, she knows what she's doing.

She gets the nod from the umpire, winds up and lets the ball fly.

Shea says she wasn't nervous about throwing in front of all those people.

However, she didn't realize how big the field really was until she was standing on the pitcher's mound. "I had to throw it pretty far," she recalls, "a lot farther than I thought."

"This was a really exciting moment for my daughter," says Olivia, Shea's mom, who was in the stands cheering her on. "Shea loves baseball. She plays on a team, plays with her siblings and watches it on TV. So for her to be able to pitch at a professional game really was a highlight."

It was a highlight made possible by the Vancouver Canadians in partnership with an organization called Kids Up Front, which collects and distributes event tickets to underprivileged children. To make it even more fun, one young fan is chosen to throw the opening pitch and attend a home game with his or her family. Shea was picked because she and her mom are part of

Helping Spirit Lodge, a community-based organization that helps alleviate family violence and abuse in the Aboriginal community. Helping Spirit Lodge is one of more than 115 partner agencies where Kids Up Front distributes tickets. Basing their work on the motto, "one little ticket, one big lift," Kids Up Front is filling empty seats in theatres and sporting and concert venues throughout Vancouver. In just four years they've provided 110,000 tickets worth more than \$2.6 million.

Vancouver Foundation, seeing the value in the experiences Kids Up Front makes possible, provided a \$45,000 grant to help deliver two Kids Up Front programs – Can't Use Your Ticket? and Kids Count.

Both programs allow children and families to participate in entertaining, educational and recreational activities they might otherwise not have the opportunity to experience.

It's a night Shea won't soon forget. The umpire yells, "Play ball!" and Shea sprints to her seat to watch her favourite game on a warm summer night, on her very own field of dreams. **VF**



Shea Jim fulfilled a dream when she threw the first pitch at a Vancouver Canadians game.



GIVING 101

Neighbours create a circle of giving

If you've got the time, the patience and the skills, do-it-yourself can be a great way to go – for home renos and for charitable giving.

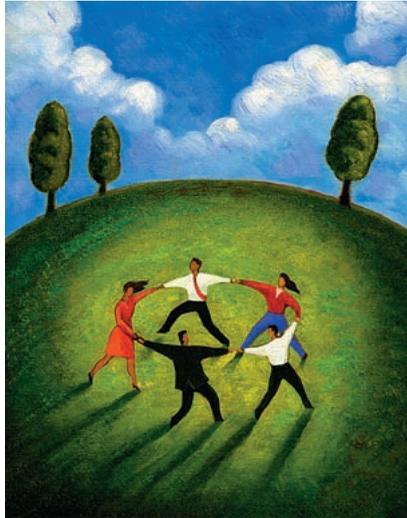
Bill Langlois and Mike Melnyk are both retired B.C. administrators and fundraisers. They've worked at a senior level for major charities in B.C., and together have more than 60 years of experience in the non-profit sector. They've always given back to their community, professionally and personally.

Four years ago, they wanted to focus their philanthropic efforts, and find a way to encourage friends and family to give as well. So they set up a unique endowment fund with Vancouver Foundation. The Beacon Fund, named after a cat Langlois and Melnyk found in Victoria's Beacon Hill Park, is loosely based on the concept of a "giving circle," wherein a group of donors pool their money, then decide communally which charities should benefit.

"We did some research," says Langlois, "then we recruited people who we thought might be interested – like-minded people."

Beacon Fund donors include Langlois and Melnyk's friends, family and neighbours in White Rock, who donate whatever they wish to the fund. Nine people (Dr. Dorothy Kennedy, Brad Jalbert, Gordon and Judy White, Penelope Simpson, Kim LaBreche and Catherine Ferguson) act as advisers to give direction to the fund. The advisers get together once a year in the summer and discuss which projects they should support.

"We meet in our rose garden. We have coffee and dessert, and the discussion can last all afternoon," says Melnyk. "We encourage



people when they come to the meeting to bring two organizations they wish to recommend. Also, we've invited groups to come talk to us, to present a proposal for consideration.... People get to know each other over time and they will advocate, often strongly, for the charity of their choice."

The Beacon Fund has almost \$50,000, which has generated enough money to make a grant of about \$2,000 every year. In 2008, the fund gave \$1,900 to the South Fraser Women's Services Society for a project on literacy.

"They were able to take our grant and use it as a pilot to get more funding for a bigger program," says Langlois. "That was one of our goals when we set up the fund – we wanted to support local causes. We also felt it was important to fund a women's organization because many of these are chronically under-funded."

With their experience, Langlois and Melnyk are acutely aware of the potential pitfalls of this type of giving. "When you do charity at a personal level, and it extends into your social networks, you have to be professional," says Langlois. "We take minutes. We get reports from the organizations we fund and circulate copies. It can seem a bit formal, but there has to be some structure."

Finding a home for the Beacon Fund was the easiest decision.

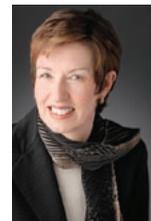
"We had dealings with Vancouver Foundation in our working lives," says Melnyk. "We've received funds from the Foundation through grant applications, so we've always been very aware of the good work Vancouver Foundation does in the community. It was a natural choice." **VF**

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They join nine other Board members who give their time, give their expertise, and give back to communities across British Columbia.



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