

the INDICATOR

March 2005



Quality of Life
CHALLENGE

A joint publication of the Quality of Life CHALLENGE and the Community Council

Quality of Life CHALLENGE LEADERSHIP PARTNERS



Vibrant
COMMUNITIES



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

SHAW



103.1
JACK fm
playing what we want

TIMES COLONIST



Community Council

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS -TRANSPORTATION

On March 15th, 2005 the Victoria Regional Transit Commission added 5000 free bus tickets and 120 free monthly passes to the existing 20,000 free bus tickets and day passes they provide annually to the BC Transit Ticket Assistance Program.

The Community Council requested the increase based on advice from 22 social service agencies that give these free tickets to people with urgent transportation needs. Many of the tickets are used to help people go to employment training or seek work. See the report on "what's new" on www.communitycouncil.ca.

THE CHALLENGE: CREATE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Have you heard this before?

Give someone a fish - you perform an act of charity.

Teach a person to fish - you contribute to a sustainable solution.

Keep buying the surplus fish - there will be money for the kids' education.

People living in poverty face a steep climb in their struggle to earn income that will improve their quality of life - stretching a few dollars to cover the basic costs of housing, transportation, dental care, clothing, child care, phone, computer and, of course, food - while finding resources for career planning and skills training.

Since 2003 the Quality of Life CHALLENGE has focused attention on three priorities that threaten quality of life in BC's Capital Region - housing, sustainable incomes and community connections. Some recent decisions show how all sectors of this community are contributing to sustainable solutions that will improve the quality of life for people in this region - now and into the future.

REGIONAL HOUSING TRUST FUND STARTS WITH \$614,616 PER YEAR!

On March 23, 2005 the Board of the Capital Regional District approved a Bylaw to establish a Regional Housing Trust Fund. The City of Victoria, District of Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, View Royal and Sooke will allocate money to the fund in accordance with a specified funding formula. Other municipalities decided not to join at this time, but have the option of doing so in the future. Full participation would increase the size of the fund to \$1 million per year. See www.crd.bc.ca

Many people from business, government and community organizations formed a unique and effective collaboration. The Quality of Life CHALLENGE, the Housing Affordability Partnership and the Community Council worked together to support the CRD to develop the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy and the Regional Housing Trust Fund. Public awareness increased about housing issues and solutions through:

- Publication and wide distribution of local research - "Making Room: The Human Face of Housing Affordability in BC's Capital Region".
- Media coverage about housing in the Times Colonist, the Newsgroup, on Shaw TV, the Ocean, JACK fm, CBC radio, CFAX, Village 900.
- Public forums during annual Housing Affordability Week.
- A well-attended information session on Housing Trust Funds.
- Presentations to all municipal councils about housing issues and solutions.
- Presenting recognition decals to 6 municipal councils and 3 committees who took action to address housing affordability.
- Information about the housing trust fund prepared for all mayors and councils.

IMPROVED DENTAL CARE

On March 14, 2005, the BC government announced a range of measures to enhance dental health for young children and low-income families. These include placing post-graduate dental residents in communities where access to dental service is a challenge (these could be located in not-for-profit community dental clinics); an educational campaign with the B.C. Dental Association on how to prevent dental decay in young children; and an increase in dental fee coverage from 63% to 80% of the dentists' fee guide for children in low-income families and people on income assistance

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE Dental Task Force supported the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group and Victoria Cool Aid Community Health Centre in their research and awareness-raising on dental issues.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE:

- helped create communications materials for the Cool Aid Community Dental Clinic.
- increased awareness of the link between dental issues and barriers to employment.
- helped create a dental fund at the Cool Aid Community Health Centre. Donations cover costs for dental services for those with no insurance or adequate coverage.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Some corporations are demonstrating commitment to community change by investing in coordinated strategies and systemic solutions.

Coast Capital Savings is a Leadership Partner in the Quality of Life CHALLENGE. Since January 2003, it has been investing \$75,000 a year for 4 years in this comprehensive community initiative. Coast Capital integrates the CHALLENGE into its business practices.

The Quality of Life CHALLENGE has established an Employers' Task Force. Stories have been gathered from 22 local employers who model best Human Resources practices, provide sustainable incomes and/or enhance quality of life in their workplace. See newsletter, "the Employer CHALLENGE" at www.qolchallenge.ca.

Two hundred people celebrated the February 25th launch of the Values-Based Business Network. Their purpose is to nurture a sustainable business community and to promote the well-being and prosperity of every person in society; environmental consciousness in business practice; and economic viability that provides a fair return to investors, employees and the community. Coast Capital Savings and VanCity invest in the Values Based Business Network and in the Housing Affordability Partnership. See www.vbnetwork.ca



John Davits, owner of Pepper's Foods in Cadboro Bay was featured in "the Employer CHALLENGE" for providing sustainable incomes to his employees. See www.qolchallenge.ca.

In September 2002, VanCity Credit Union became a partner with BC Housing, the Ministry of Human Resources and Burnside Gorge Community Association in the Family Self Sufficiency Program.

Now families who have never before had savings, can plan for a future with the dollars they accrue.

Low income families living in subsidized housing develop goals and plans to move towards economic self-sufficiency. VanCity supports their efforts through individual development accounts so that each participant saves money monthly for two years. This money is matched to support goals such as education, business start-up or home ownership. See www.bchousing.org/files/Collatoral_Material/Family_Self_Sufficiency_Study.PDF

Quality of Life CHALLENGE SUPPORTERS:



City of Victoria
The Victoria Foundation
CRD Arts Development Office
BC Housing
VanCity
Ann Geddes
Thrifty Foods
Shine*Ola Communications
Crystal Garden Conservation Centre
Susan Stovel
Stages Dance Company
WCG International Consultants Ltd.
Access Unlimited Consulting
KPMG
BCGEU
Thomas Jones



Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria

Vision – a sustainable quality of life for everyone. Mission – providing leadership to bring the community together.

Supported by members, the United Way of Greater Victoria, contracted services and the municipalities of Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria.

1144 Fort Street, Victoria BC, V8V 3K8 • phone: (250) 383-6166 • fax: (250) 385-6712
email: info@communitycouncil.ca • www.communitycouncil.ca • www.qolchallenge.ca