

Abbotsford Community & Services

Fall 2010



Stories of People Helping People

The First Word

As the new President of the Abbotsford Community Services Board of Directors, I look forward to working with the dedicated individuals who comprise both the board and the staff of ACS, who work so diligently to improve the well-being of those in the community. Gerry Palmer, President of the Board for the past three years, is no easy act to follow. All of us on the Board are extremely grateful to Gerry for his wise, compassionate leadership and unflinching sense of perspective (and his irrepressible sense of humour).

One of the greatest challenges this past year was the selection of a new Executive Director to replace Thelma Schrock. The selection committee devoted extensive hours to the process. The Board warmly welcomes Rod Santiago, formerly of Chilliwack Community Services; we are confident that he can lead the agency through the challenges ahead. Rod brings with him a reputation for building partnerships, and ACS hopes to form new relationships within the community, and to strengthen existing ones.

This spring ACS faced cuts to several programs for children and families, part of a province-wide reduction on the part of the provincial government. We will be working hard to find ways of compensating for this loss, re-structuring those programs, and trying to maintain services. On the positive side, donations to the agency increased by 17% over the last fiscal year, with the largest increases to the food bank and “where most needed.” These funds will aid greatly in serving children and families.

A recent planning exercise reminded me once again of the numerous strengths of ACS: a tremendous range of programs, strong personnel, good managers, a solid board of directors, clear and accountable systems, financial stability—and an enormous number of loyal donors and volunteers. I cannot stress enough how reliant our work is on the kindness and generosity of community members.

Ideally, we would like you to see Abbotsford Community Services as your community services. ACS is not a branch of the city or government, but a non-profit agency with programs that serve everyone from children to seniors, from new immigrants to those long established within the community. Whether you are a current or potential client, a volunteer, or an interested community member, you can join us as one of the people helping people.

Virginia Cooke
Board President



Fall 2010

2009/10 Board of Directors

President – Dr. Virginia Cooke
Russ Bleackley
Barry Griffiths
Christine Lane
Gerald Palmer
Njeri Kontulahti
Brenda Benedict
Preena Maan
David Smith
Dr. Elizabeth Watt
Serge Blanchette
Donna Inrig
Barbara Pearson
Betty Joan Traverse
Ross Siemens

Mission - Vision Statement

Abbotsford Community Services is an agency that fosters community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership.

Statement of Diversity

We are children, youth, adults and seniors
We are of all races, all religions, all cultures, all abilities, all sexual orientation and all economic levels.
We speak many languages.
We value diversity.
We endeavour to reflect this diversity in our volunteers, board, and staff.
We respect all our neighbours and clients and extend our respect to them in all that we do.
We embrace all types of families.
Therefore, we will act to promote inclusion of all in our agency and in our community.

Artistic & Graphic Design

Valdiene | creativeworks@shaw.ca

The 2010 Stories of People Helping People is printed on Unisource Save-A-Tree Paper - 100% post consumer recycled content



Cover Design
Valdiene | creativeworks@shaw.ca

C O N T E N T S

FEATURE STORIES

- 4 **MIKE** - how 12 years of accessing services is helping this young man and his family
- 8 **DAVID** - how the community came together to help a senior in need
- 10 **SURVIVING ABUSE** - how support and information gave this mother the courage to speak out and move on with her life
- 16 **ROBIN** - how many programs all linked together, helped make her a better mother
- 20 **GECALAO FAMILY** - how immigrant settlement services helped this family feel at home

INSIDE Programs & Services

- 14 **FOOD BANK**
- 22 **YOUTH BUDDY**
- 24 **FOCUS ON FRIENDS**
- 26 **FAMILY EDUCATION**
- 28 **YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE**

People with FAS

Need an Outside Brain

Mike is fortunate. He has many outside brains thanks to the love and caring support of his foster mom and her extended family and the 'many brains' available to him at Abbotsford Community Services

“You wouldn’t expect a person in a wheelchair at the bottom of a flight of stairs to get to the top unless you gave them support, assistance or showed them another way to the top. But kids with FAS/FASD face that type of dilemma every day because no one sees their disability, it’s invisible. It’s certainly not well understood.” - Mike’s Foster Mom, Linda

Mike was born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), a horrible condition that may occur when a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. She risks giving birth to a child who will pay the price in mental and physical deficiencies for their entire life.

Some of the characteristics of the disorder include poor socialization skills, such as difficulty building and maintaining friendships, learning difficulties, including poor memory, inability to understand concepts such as time and money, poor language comprehension, poor problem-solving skills, behavioral problems, including hyperactivity, inability to concentrate, social withdrawal, stubbornness, impulsiveness, and anxiety. Problems associated with FASD tend to intensify as children move into adulthood. These can include mental health problems, troubles with the law, and the inability to live independently.

At the age of 12 Mike went to live with foster mother Linda in 1998. “I cannot even imagine the trauma that this boy must have experienced as a child,” she says. “This horrible condition is not his

fault and he deserves support; he deserves a chance.”

Luckily for Mike, Linda was a very dedicated foster parent with special gifts to deal with a high needs child. She was very conscious of the need to understand Mike’s behaviors in order to have an attachment with him.

Mike’s connection with Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) began early. At the age of ten when he first went into foster care, it was ACS who hired and supported foster parents of high needs children.

Through the Kids in Care Support (KICS) program Mike was introduced to Jeff McLean, a youth worker at that time. Jeff remembers him as quite a ‘young punk’ but despite the challenges Jeff managed to build a solid relationship with him.

Mike confesses he was a hot-headed little kid, but growing up in Linda’s home was a great fit for him. Linda had two sons of her own around the same age as Mike which made things a little easier. She got him involved in community league sports like Abbotsford Falcons Football which Mike really enjoyed. He confesses that sports often kept him out of trouble.

Linda emphasizes the value of community sports and wishes there were more of them for kids like Mike who clearly have an invisible disability. “But Mike’s challenges often got in the way of keeping at these sports because he couldn’t get some things right, then he’d get angry and walk off the field.”

By the time Mike turned 17 he moved out of



Linda's home.

A lot of poor choices sent him down a path of hard core drugs, gangs and violence, he was in and out of jail, fathered a child that he lost all contact with and he was quickly losing his connection to his foster family.

At the age of 20 he tried to clean up his act and came to the Abbotsford Addictions Centre at ACS. "He intimated that he was tired of that life and wanted to change," comments addictions counsellor Paul Henry. But it was difficult for this young tough guy who continued to face challenges because of his FASD. He tried the recovery program at Kinghaven Treatment Centre but was kicked out because of his anger and ended up back in jail.

"Many of his behaviors through this period were triggered by the FASD," says Linda. It was difficult to hold onto her own boundaries through those years, especially when Mike asked to come back home and live with her. Though she said no, she never cut off contact with him.

Mike continued to work on his addictions issues. "He was possibly most influenced, not by me, but by the fact that he was going to be a dad," says Paul. "This actually happened part way through the counselling process and just piggy backed on the desire he already had to change. As we progressed he was able to make better choices for his life and to demonstrate a willingness to let Stephanie (his girlfriend) influence him. He stopped using hard drugs, was less angry, became more mature, and

learned to be a better listener."

Mike says he felt safe when he talked to Paul. "He was easy to talk to and actually seemed to listen and he gave me some pretty good advice."

Linda encouraged Mike and Stephanie to get involved in the Best for Babies (B4B) program, another link to the wide range of services offered at ACS. B4B offers early intervention support for high risk pregnant and parenting women and their partners. Mike's only reason for attending B4B was because Jeff

sportsman-like players there and even a leader of sorts when others were losing their cool.

As the baby's birth approached Jeff attended Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) case conferences with Mike and helped him learn how to control himself when confronted with authority.

MCFD had originally planned to apprehend the couple's baby at birth but the social worker agreed to give them a chance noting how many strong, supportive supports they had in place.



Mike, support worker Jeff, Stephanie, and baby Makenzie

McLean (his youth worker in the KICS program) was now a Father Support Worker with B4B. He enjoyed having an older person around with whom he already built a positive relationship.

Mike began to attend Monday night floor hockey with Jeff and a group of other young dads. Jeff says he came across as a hair trigger angry type of fellow, but somehow at hockey which would be a perfect place to explode, he turned out to be one of the most

week together in the community learning how to navigate daily life with an infant in tow. These were some of my favorite times with Mike as he proudly strolled around Abbotsford with his little girl. We did banking together, we went on hikes and walks and did errands with her. It was amazing how much learning came about in 'teachable moments' with him in these situations."

Stephanie and Makenzie are

now involved with the New Beginnings program at ACS, just another part of the big team supporting and keeping this young family healthy and strong. Stephanie is working towards completing her high school education while Makenzie is a happy growing child in the on-site daycare.

Because of his past drug use and reckless lifestyle, Mike needed considerable dental work. But he couldn't afford that kind of work on his limited pension income as a Person With a Disability. Once again, Linda connected him to another ACS program. Some of his basic restoration work is being done at the Food Bank's Dental Clinic by local dentists who volunteer their time and expertise.

Mike and Stephanie have also registered for the Parent Project class in the Family Education Program. As soon as a spot is available, they will take that next step forward in their evolution as a thriving family with the help of yet another one of the many services at ACS.

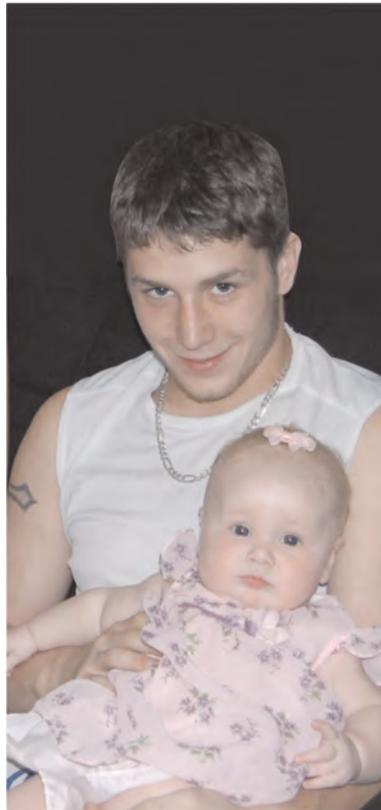
Looking back on some of those 'crazy' periods of his life now Mike realizes how stupid it was to have spent so much energy trying to make people like him through his tough guy routine. "It's more important for me to like myself, it doesn't matter what other people think of me. That was something my mom used to tell me. Mom always taught me good."

He wants to make sure he and Stephanie will be able to keep raising their daughter and he really wants to be a good dad. "I want to be there for her whenever she needs me; I want her to know she can always come to me."

Mike and Stephanie are doing fine these days, but they will

always need lots of people around them as they try to raise their daughter. They have the love required to raise a child, and the skills to do that job can be learned with the right help and support.

As Linda says, "People with FASD need an outside brain to help them make good, sound rational decisions throughout their lives." Mike is fortunate. He has many outside brains thanks to the love and caring support of his foster mom and her extended family and the 'many brains' available to him at Abbotsford Community Services. The wide range of community supports they now have are the result of the extensive and long term connections that ACS helped put in place for Mike and his family. As some would say, it takes a community to raise a family.



**in the time
it takes...**

*to make
your coffee*



**you can
make a difference**

**with a donation to
Abbotsford Community Services**

Mail or drop off a cheque to:
2420 Montrose Ave
Abbotsford BC
V2S 3S9



“I had no idea all these services and resources were busy working in our community,” says David. “I never needed them. It’s like having a second chance at life...”

caring community *saves a man* from slipping through the cracks

Fraser Health’s Home Health Social Worker Randy Goossen remembers the call from a local apartment building manager concerned about an elderly renter who seemed to be isolating himself and was at risk of eviction.

“I arranged to visit David (not his real name) thinking I would walk into an apartment in chaos and see a very confused older man but I was pleasantly surprised. David was articulate, clean and well dressed and the small apartment was very tidy. At that initial assessment it was apparent that his immediate need was food and shelter.”

David had no phone, hydro was threatening to disconnect services and the landlord, while sympathetic to his situation, was running out of patience. Randy assured the landlord that Home Health was now assisting him, and immediately got the ACS Food Bank and Meals on Wheels involved.

Now in his sixties, David had been a professional working with various engineering firms across the country and eventually built his own consulting business. But somewhere along the road, things began to go sideways. Some bad investments resulted in a foreclosure on his home.

Around the same time he lost his house, his vision started to deteriorate. He tried to compensate and hide

the condition but it got so bad he could no longer work. Eventually all the financial resources ran out and he could no longer pay the rent. He was very fortunate to have an understanding and compassionate property manager, but after almost five months she gave David an ultimatum: “Get help by the end of the week, or I’ll have to put your stuff out on the street.”

Sensing that David was probably too proud to make the call for help she called Home Health herself.

“This is a situation where everyone involved in David’s case has gone above and beyond the call of duty right from the building manager to everyone here at ACS,” comments Goossen.

Senior Services Manager Christina Ragneborg helped David with the SAFER

subsidy application (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters). “He is such a sweet man; it’s hard to understand how things got to this point in his life. Working together with Randy at Home Health, we are all doing everything we can to help David get his life back on track.”

“I had no idea all these services and resources were busy working in our community,” says David. “I never needed them. It’s like having a second chance at life; these people come to help like they actually want to and are enthusiastic about helping. I am so grateful each day.”



Volunteer MOW Driver, Liz Sweeney

Lunch with the Bunch

14 years of Happy Mondays



Annual LWB Picnic: Eda takes charge of dancing

Charles & Eda Christian say they would be lost if there was no Lunch with the Bunch.

“We have built some very meaningful friendships through this program. This is one big happy family here, everyone says that, not just us.”

They have been coming to the weekly Monday outing for 14 years and if for whatever reason they cannot attend, Eda says “We really and truly miss it. We’re involved in other community groups too but this is by far the very best there is.

Nancy Deba, and the rest of the staff and volunteers go above and beyond the call of duty. We absolutely love it here!”

Confusing Paperwork

sends senior looking for help

Iris Webb was getting so overwhelmed by the barrage of government documents that kept showing up in her mailbox that she finally came to Abbotsford Community Services looking for help.

Born and raised in England with adult children living in Canada and no husband anymore, she decided to make the Abbotsford and Mission areas home. But there was so much paperwork to deal with. Luckily a good friend she got to know through the ‘Meet the Brits Club’ suggested asking for assistance at ACS Senior Services.

With a pension from England there was the issue of five years worth of Income Tax forms to complete. She needed to sort out the logistics of her landed immigrant status and when she decided to go shopping with friends into Bellingham one day there was the issue of a valid Canadian passport.

“It was coming from all directions,” she says. “It was so very confusing. I could never have figured it all out on my own. Thank goodness for places like Community Services!”



Iris Webb and her ever present friend Minnie

**in the time
it takes...**

*to dry
your nails*



you can
make a difference

**with a donation to
Abbotsford Community Services**

Donate online by going to
abbotsfordcommunityservices.com

Click on the Canada Helps button



on the Home Page or on
the Donors Page

Specialized Victim Assistance

“Finally I had an advocate on my side. I would never have had the courage to read my victim impact statement in court without the significant moral support from your program and staff.”

The Specialized Victim Assistance Program (SVAP) offers support for people who have been impacted by crime and trauma. “The needs of the victim come first,” says Supervisor Lukhvinder Aujla. “All of our staff, who are highly trained professionals, realize it is a very difficult and emotional time for our clients and we are here to help with the justice system and lend an empathetic ear.

In Sandy’s case (not her real name), her family was torn apart by sexual assault. “Sexual abuse and/or assault affects the whole family and we are all struggling to deal with this ordeal in our own way,” she says. But the sense of calm and confidence she received through the support of Joanne, a SVAP worker, made it possible for her and her daughters to get through the ordeal. “What my girls may not realize is that Joanne’s support allowed me to calm down enough to bring the stress level in our home down.”

Before connecting with SVAP Sandy found herself curled up in the fetal position in bed, so depressed and experiencing irrational fears that at times it became extremely difficult to function with the most routine activities. “I became consumed with fear, guilt, anxiety and significant depression and unable to work and provide for my daughters, financially or emotionally,” says Sandy.

“But my first conversation with Joanne, gave me hope I was not alone and I had support in maneuvering the next steps in the process and a competent, supportive ally in whatever the future would bring with this hideous situation. Joanne gave me confidence I had an advocate on MY side and we would have support throughout the process and unsure future.”

Sandy comments that Joanne was objective, forthright and supportive in advising her that there could be no accurate predictions regarding the time lines, delays, twists and turns in the court process or outcomes.

“Joanne’s objective, straight forth approach was calming! And, because of her involvement and support I was able to focus on work again and generate income and thus reduce further stress and anxiety from the fallout of our experience.” “Your service has been my lifeline and savior! Clearly, I would recommend your program enthusiastically.”



SVAP Services Offered:

Emotional & practical support – Case information & updates – Liaison with Crown Counsel & other agencies – Court orientation & accompaniment – Assistance with Victim Impact Statements & Crime Victim Assistance Program applications – Information about the dynamics and impact of abuse & assault – Referrals to counselling, support groups & other services. Offices are located in both Mission and Abbotsford.



**in the time
it takes...**

*to find the sock
the dryer ate*

you can *make a difference*

**with a donation to
Abbotsford Community Services**

Your Giving Options Are Easy

Mail or drop off a cheque

Visit us online

www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com
and click the Canada Helps button

Phone 604.859.7681

to set up preauthorized gifts
via debit or credit card

Leave a gift in your will

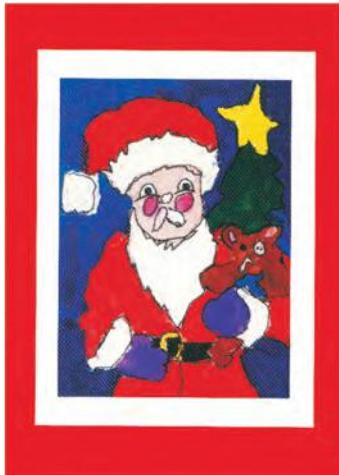
Talk to your lawyer or financial advisor today

Thank you for taking the time - every donation makes a big difference

Philanthropy Begins Early

Meet two young families raising children with giving attitudes

A donation arrived at the Food Bank last Christmas in a very whimsical art card. The artist's 'bio' was included on the back. Art by Ceilidh – Age 6. I have been drawing and painting since I was 2 years old. When I grow up I would like to be an artist ... traveling around the world finding new ideas for my artwork and helping people.



How did that initial Food Bank donation come about?

Mom Wendie was approached by a woman asking for money in a parking lot one day last fall. Ceilidh and her younger brother witnessed the encounter and asked why she would not give the lady some money for food. That

evening, Wendie had an honest conversation with the kids, explaining what seemed to be going in the woman's life and they began to look at alternative ways of helping people in need. The Food Bank seemed the logical answer.

Over the years of her young life, Ceilidh has raised funds for Cystic Fibrosis, Cops for Cancer, Free the Children Fund – Haiti Relief, the Jada Kooy Memorial Fund and the Food Bank.



An inspired & inspiring young artist - Ceilidh

Why does she do it?

"I like to raise money for charities because people are needing help all the time," she answers. "So when people are struggling and I'm at home playing or learning at school and eating delicious meals, I think about how fortunate I am. That's why I give generously, because I feel so fortunate, I should always give back to help others!"

“Even though she doesn’t understand it now, hopefully when she is a little older we can teach her to have this giving attitude as part of her life long experience.”

Giving Attitude

You are invited to join us in celebrating our beautiful daughter Bo’s 1st birthday! Bo is very thankful for the family and friends she has been blessed with. In lieu of gifts for herself she would like to ask people to bring items like diapers, formula and other baby necessities for children who aren’t as fortunate as her. Bo will be donating these items to help out other little boys and girls.

That was the message in the invitation sent out to family and friends.

“We always gave to other charities but when we had our own baby, we wanted to give to a ‘baby-friendly’ organization or program in the community,” says Stella, Bo’s mom.

Thanks to a family relative we learned about all the different infant programs at Abbotsford Community Services so we decided to give here. Parents Clint and Stella want to teach their daughter right from infancy the importance of helping others.



Our youngest donor, Bo, and her mom, Stella

Last year, **YOU** helped Abbotsford Community Services raise \$941,494.00. **THANK YOU!**

Where did those donations go?

78.8%	14.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%	0.2%	1.8%
Food Bank	Where Most Needed	Seniors	Family Centre	Multi-cultural	Building/Endowment	Other



CORE PROGRAMS

more than a food bank

Hamper A

Canned Vegetables
Dry Pasta
Tomatoes/Pasta Sauce
Beans/Canned Pasta
Dry Soup
Juice
Chunky Soup
Extras: Flour,
Sugar, Peanut Butter/Jam

Hamper B

Canned Fruit
Canned Tuna/Meat
Canned Soup
SideKicks
Kraft Dinner
Rice
Extras: Cereal, Oats
Powered Milk

FOOD BANK

emergency food and short term solutions
for families & individuals in need

REAL

matches clients with volunteers for
one-to-one support, twice a month for a year

DENTAL CLINIC

free dental clinic with two chairs in
operation two mornings a week

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

school supplies for kindergarten
to high school students

CHRISTMAS BUREAU

toy run, sponsor a family, Curl for Kids

EXTREME WEATHER

providing shelter for the homeless
during harsh weather conditions

HIGH PROTEIN PROGRAM

providing food for those with HIV/AIDS

BASICS FOR BABIES

baby food, diapers, and other supplies

CARES CARD

goods and services card with basic
necessities for the homeless

GARDEN BOX

low cost/high quality produce



Abbotsford
Food Bank

DONATION DROP-OFF LOCATION

33914 Essendene Avenue

Abbotsford, BC V2S 2H8

Tel: 604.859.5749

New Way of Distributing Food

“We are beginning to see 10 or 12 families who are into that second generation of needing assistance from the Food Bank. We need to help families break this dependency cycle.” - Roberta, Program Assistant -

The Abbotsford Community Services Food Bank is here for emergency temporary help but it has turned into an ongoing necessity for many individuals and families.

Until recently clients were able to come in weekly for bread, produce and reclaimed items and they also received a monthly hamper.

Now the Food Bank is trying something a little different and hopefully the change in the way food is distributed will cause some clients to think a little differently about how they look at their limited financial resources and the assistance of the food bank.

Clients can now come twice a month to receive Hamper A or Hamper B depending on the time of the month. Bread and produce are included and they can also come once a month on what is being called ‘Funky Friday’ when they can choose up to 25 or 30 reclaimed items.

So far the new system has been working well but is it enough to change people’s attitudes about the Food Bank? It is still too early to tell but Roberta certainly hopes so.

“There are lots of families that only come two or three, maybe four times a year when they really need it. These are the families we want to help because they are really trying their best.”

Who are the food bank clients?

People on welfare

Low income earners – many are full time employees working predominantly in the retail field, many are nurses aides or teachers’ aides

Seniors – living on limited income/pensions

People with physical or mental disabilities

Most Urgent Need?

Meat – dairy products – Boost – baby formula – powdered milk

Number 1 Wish?

Hands down - a new building. They have outgrown the current location and it is not conducive to their needs, not for clients picking up food and not for all the other ‘core programs’ they are operating.



A



B

There is no single definition of post-partum depression or PPD. It is a group of symptoms that can negatively affect a pregnant or new mother. The symptoms can range from mild blues to anxiety and total despair. Depression and anxiety around childbirth can affect any childbearing woman regardless of race, income, culture, age or education.

Robin and her husband moved to Abbotsford in 2004 just before their first child was born. During a period that was “supposed to be one of the happiest times” in her life, Robin’s moods were sinking.

She needed help so she reached out to the Family Centre at Abbotsford Community Services and found a lifeline in the **Postpartum and Wellness Program**. The program’s mission statement says it all: to normalize the difficult feelings women may experience during pregnancy and after the birth (or adoption) of a child, and to provide them and their families with easily accessible local resources.

The main thing Robin got from that program was the knowledge that “it always gets better.” The valuable information and emotional support she received through the weekly group sessions helped her through that dark time.

But that was not the only encounter Robin had with Abbotsford Community Services. She quickly realized there were many programs all linked together to assist parents so she decided to learn everything she could. “You only get one chance at being a good parent,” Robin says, “so why not learn as much as you can and be supported as much as possible.”

Since that first encounter with the Wellness group, Robin has participated in almost every program offered through Family Centre.



She needed help so she reached out to the Family Centre at Abbotsford Community Services and found a lifeline...

You **only** have **one** chance to be a **good** parent

Read Robin’s account of how multiple programs linked together enabled her to become a more secure parent

‘The thing about parenting is that we do make mistakes, but that doesn’t mean it’s the end of the world.’

At **Best for Babies** Robin realized that everyone may come from different backgrounds, “but we all have one thing in common which is the desire to raise a healthy family. In **Best for Babies** I got a lot of really good nutritional and mental health advice that I would not have gotten anywhere else.”

In 2005, as part of the **Women’s Wellness Program**, Robin found some great friendships evolving. “I still get together with another woman I met in the program at the time and we have coffee and talk about everything – not just our families though that is a big part of our bond.”

She then attended the **Free to Be Me Classes** where she learned the importance of self care. “As a mom I find I always have to remind myself of that. Taking care of myself helps me take better care of my kids.”

For Robin, the next link in the chain of services was **Nobody’s Perfect**. “The thing about parenting is that we do make mistakes, but that doesn’t mean it’s the end of the world.”

During her third pregnancy she participated in **Best for Babies** again. She laughs when she admits, “Older people have children too. I was 40 at the time

and she (daughter Caylee) was a surprise.” Another thing she appreciates about many of the programs is the little extras they offer like tickets for nutritional foods at the local farmers markets.

She attended **Raising Your Spirited Child** classes. She found that she was always ‘clashing’



with her middle child. “That’s probably because he and I are so much alike. The class taught me what a spirited child is all about and how to deal with some of the difficult situations.”

Robin also comes to the Monday and Wednesday **Community Drop-ins at Family Centre**. “It’s nice to get out and meet other women; it gives you a true feeling of connecting. It’s such a nice place to relax and socialize with the kids.”

During the **I Got You Babe** and **Precious Babies Programs**, Robin began to appreciate the more intimate groups and the

knowledge she gleaned specific to her child’s age groups.

One of the final links for Robin was the **Mom & Tots Program and the Preschool**. “It was good for me to get out with the other moms in particular when I was going through some difficulties. Both of the boys participated in the preschool and it benefitted both of them a lot. It’s so nice to be in a place that is so very accommodating and fun for all of us.”

“It has been great getting to know Robin and her children,” says Preschool Supervisor Tania Rempel. “We have seen her transformation since her first son was born and watched her mature into motherhood in such an amazing way. Throughout the years I have watched her access programs to support her family and herself as a mom, build relationships with other families, strengthen her bond with her three children, and become a support to other moms who need some extra encouragement. It has been unique to watch this evolution as Robin has become more secure to parent her children in a healthy way and become more proactive about her involvement in the children’s lives.”

“This place is a lifesaver; this (Family Centre) is my big library of resources that I can come to anytime,” says Robin. “I was kind of blown away when I first became a parent at the range of things offered. Support is the number one thing I have taken away from all the programs here. I always felt that everyone genuinely cared and were interested in me. People here – they really get it!”

Why they do what they do



Name: Helen
Age: 70 'something'
Family: 1 daughter + 1 grandson, both in Toronto
Background: Gave up a university teaching job in Manila, the Philippines and came to Canada at the age of 25
Time Served: 10 years at ACS + 15 years with the Hospital Auxiliary
Area of Service: Initially at Lunch With the Bunch, followed by receptionist duties at the Old Courthouse Building, and finally with Community Drop-ins at Family Centre
Why: "To get out of the house, to meet lots of different people, and so I won't lose my mind or get Alzheimer's."
Other Activities: Aerobics every other day at the local gym
Walking, walking, walking
Teaches ESL at Sevenoaks Alliance
Quotable Quote: "I keep physically active so that I will stay mentally healthy as I get older."



Name: Bobbie
Age: 70 'plus, plus, plus'
Family: 1 son + 1 granddaughter
Background: Born and raised in Vancouver, lived back east for about 5 years but then came back to BC where she raised her son on her own. "It was tough, but it was MORE than worth it."
Time Served: 7 years at ACS + a lifetime; volunteering since her teens with numerous different organizations
Area of Service: Lunch With the Bunch
Why: "It's a labor of love and I'm a people person. I do it for the pleasure of meeting and interacting with other people."
Other Activities: She is a 'fiercely competitive' game player. Favorite game: Up Words (similar to Scrabble)
"I have a competition going with one of my good friends, and right now things are as they should be; I'm in the lead!"
Quotable Quote: "I might be old – whatever that means – but I am busy you know. I do have a life."

IN THE TIME IT TAKES
this paint to dry

You CAN
make a difference
in someone's life
...and in your own



Opportunities at Abbotsford Community Services:
Meals on Wheels Delivery • Youth Mentor • Food Bank sorter & packer • Event Planner • Data Entry • Lunch with the Bunch food server •
On-Line Research • Host Friend to a Newcomer • Employment Mentor to a New Immigrant • Board member • Fundraising event
organizer • Mentor to a Food Bank client
volunteer@abbotsfordcommunityservices.com

Helping newcomers

navigate through the maze of documentation

Florentino Gecalao comes from Laguna Province in the Philippines which is located southeast of Metro Manila. It's where he met and married his wife Agnes, and where they began raising their three young boys.

Florentino saw a golden opportunity when Canada's Weston Bakeries, the makers of Wonder Bread hosted a 'job fair' in Manila. Concerned about his job security at the time, frustrated with big city pollution and demands for employment caused by overpopulation, Florentino was looking for a better life for his family.

He went to the job fair and was recruited by Weston to come to Canada as part of BC's Provincial (Immigration) Nominee Program (PNP) which facilitates expedited immigration processing.

After formalizing his job application and acceptance on-line, he arrived in Canada in the spring of 2008, leaving his family behind, and began working at the bakery in Langley within a week. He had a three year employment contract.

Since there were no available accommodations in the Langley or Surrey area, with the help of his new employer, Florentino found a suitable home in an apartment in West Abbotsford. With good steady employment and a home to bring his family to, Florentino returned to the Philippines in June 2010 to reunite with Agnes, Kurt (6 years), Karl (4 years) and little Lance (2 years). How did the Abbotsford Community Services Immigrant Settlement Program assist the family through this journey from one side of the world to the other?



Florentino with his wife Agnes and one of his three young boys

There is a lot of paperwork that goes along with bringing a family to our country, and it can be overwhelming. ACS settlement workers have assisted hundreds of families and are well versed on the 'ins and outs' of government bureaucracy. For the Gecalao family we helped with:

Social Insurance Number applications

Medical Service Plan applications

GST & HST Credit applications

Canada Child Tax Benefits applications

Child Care Subsidy applications

School District 34 student registration & orientation

City of Abbotsford Parks & Recreation Services Credit program applications

Explaining the various resources available to Agnes who is looking for part-time work (she taught elementary school in the Philippines)

It's been a long journey, but the smiles on Florentino & Agnes' faces say it has been worth it. They are very optimistic and hopeful for a bright future for themselves and their young sons.

Family Fun Day

Hosted by Immigrant Settlement at Mill Lake Park



More Services to Immigrants and the Multicultural Community

Located at #5 - 32700 George Ferguson Way

South Asian Community Resource Office (SACRO) – a crime prevention service to engage youth and families in the South Asian community

Youthemes – recreation program for youth in grades 6-12 promoting friendship, fun and being violence free

Immigrant Youth & Young Adults (IYYA) – assisting youth and young adults who are not meeting, or are at risk of not meeting, high school graduation requirements

Youth Buddy – friendship program where new immigrant youth are matched with a youth in participating Abbotsford secondary schools

BC Skills Connect – assesses the skills, qualifications and experiences of recent immigrants and offers workplace practice opportunities to help secure and sustain employment

Located at the Apollo Centre @ 3600 Townline Road on the corner of Blueridge

Immigrant Settlement – information for newcomers about BC society and guidance and support on personal and family adjustment issues

Punjabi Mothers & Grandmothers – basic ESL support and parenting information to mothers and grandmothers of pre-school and elementary school children

Youth Buddy Program



Youth Buddy is a friendship program where new immigrant youth are matched with a youth from Abbotsford. Activities are offered at participating secondary schools. (Students often refer to the program as Culture Club or Multicultural Club). In order to be credited for their volunteer hours, participants are required to write an essay about their experiences in the program.

Here's what some of them had to say.

If the planet had a world-wide Culture Club every Thursday, it would be a much better place.

- Brendan -



Culture Club must go on because it'll be the end of us if it doesn't. No, seriously, this club needs to go because it gives shy and uninvolved people a chance to get to know other people and build their people skills. If you want to make new friends, the friendliest place at Mouat on a Wednesday is Multicultural Club. If you want to learn about cultures you were curious about, culture club has that too.

- Sim -

Culture Club must go on because otherwise I will not meet new people because multicultural club forces you to do this in a fun and casual environment. Without it lunches would be empty and not very interesting, there would be nothing to look forward to every Wednesday. Culture club must go on!

- Jill -



It's Monday, second block and already it feels like Friday. All I want to do is get home and promptly head out to the library to get some reading done. Thankfully, I remember that in two days I'll be able to hang out in Multicultural Club with everyone. Just this fact alone makes me get through the day. If Multicultural Club wasn't there to break up my week, I doubt I'd be able to make it past Tuesday.

- Emmalee -

“By learning new things about other societies and eliminating the ignorance left to us by past generations, courses such as these (culture club) erase social stigma and promote acceptance. It is my belief that we can ultimately end wars and erase the majority of hatred present in a world where so much conflict is caused not by personal

experience, but by a lack of experience with other civilizations and cultures. While a program such as this may not have an incredibly immediate effect, if one were to apply what they have learned to their future lives, and to their children, and their children's children, we could create a world where everyone is

acknowledged as equal, and all are accepted by those around them.”

- Sham -





Community Living Programs

NOVEMBER 2009

Blankets for Penny's

Four women who live at *Penny's Place* will be a little warmer tonight.

Abbotsford Community Services Focus on Friends group presented them with 15 newly knitted and crocheted blankets that they have been working on for over a year.

Focus on Friends is a Community Living program, which connects adults and seniors with developmental disabilities to the community. Supervised by Janet Artinian, the program operates from the main floor of the Old Courthouse. Support workers Yvonne and Susie have had to learn the finer art of knitting and crocheting along with clients Hannah, Cora, Betty-Lou, Bev and others.

The blankets will keep women who have little or nothing, warm and cozy at night. But more than that, the gifting of their work to another group in the community has given the Focus on Friends clients more pride than anyone could have hoped for.

The group decided to give the blankets to *Penny's Place*, a pilot project operated by the Women's Resource Society of the Fraser Valley. *Penny's Place*, a small four bedroom home in central

Abbotsford, opened in April 2009. It is a safe place for homeless women. Residents can stay as long as necessary, until they can get back on their feet.

It was an interesting gathering on a cloudy November afternoon in the Old Courthouse Activity Room. Three women who have seen it all while living on the hard cold streets, and a small group of older developmentally disabled women doing their best for someone else they don't even know. Blankets brought them together. Smiles all around will be what they all remember for many days and months to come.

Programs for People with Developmental Disabilities

Special Training and Recreation (STAR) Club

– recreational & skill building for kids & teens

Discovery – leisure & recreation day program for people aged 18 - 65

Employing People in Community (EPIC)

– provides vocational options for adults

Focus on Friends – connecting adults & seniors to the community

REMEMBER

THE THINGS YOU CAN

RECYCLE

The Recycling Program features a drop off area for blue bag recyclables and other recyclables and household hazardous waste at no charge. Residential items accepted at the Recycling Programs's drop off locations include:

PAINT

GASOLINE

FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS

HOUSEHOLD PESTICIDES

BATTERIES

household, rechargeable, car

SCRAP METAL

washers, dryers, stoves, empty propane tanks

ELECTRONICS

TV's, computers, printers etc.

CELL PHONES

and cell phone batteries

FLUORESCENT COMPACTS & TUBES

AEROSOL CANS

Call: 604-850-3551

DROP OFF LOCATIONS

33670 Valley Rd. Abbotsford

7229 Mershon St. Mission

The *impact* of Family Education

Healthy Families Create Healthy Communities



Imagine arriving at your children's school to pick them up only to be handed a slip of paper by a school administrator saying your children have been picked up earlier in the day and there is a number to call for more information.

This is not some fictional tale out of a mystery novel. It is the reality of what happened to Monique.

The 33 year old mother of three knew that things needed improving at home. But she had no idea that she and her family were in a situation that would necessitate the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) coming in and removing the children from her care.

I regret that MCFD had to come into my life, says Monique, but I do NOT regret having to take these courses.

The courses Monique refers to are offered through the Family Education programs at Abbotsford Community Services.

"The number one goal of all the family education classes is simple," says Program Supervisor Janice Olson. "We try to promote healthy families because healthy families create healthy communities."

Monique was referred by MCFD to attend Family Education classes and she took advantage of Raising Securely Attached Children, Effective Parenting, and Anger Awareness.

"I wish every parent could take this program," says Monique referring to the Raising Securely Attached Children class. "No matter how good a

parent you think you are, everyone needs to know how to be an effective parent and how to raise securely attached children. You can always get something out of these programs."

Three years ago 34 year old Jenny was also referred to Family Education by MCFD. Staff member and class instructor Yvonne Blank remembers, "Jenny was not happy about having to come here to say the least."

"I felt like I was being attacked by porcupines," says Jenny. "I have authority issues and don't like anyone telling me what to do."

In July 2006 Jenny cleaned up from a crack cocaine addiction. Her daughter was one of the reasons she decided to finally get and stay clean. In hindsight though, she realized it was a gift she gave herself.



Taking a break from family education class are: staff member Lise, participants Monique & Jenny, staff member Yvonne

“I was a stressed out parent when I came to Family Education. I was abused as a child and I knew I did not want to repeat the cycle of how I was parented. What I learned here was how to separate my childhood from how I needed to parent.”

Jenny took advantage of Parent Project, Anger Awareness, and Free to Be Me (a self-esteem program for moms).

One key element staff focus on with all their participants is creating a safe and non-judgmental environment, an environment where everyone feels comfortable.

Obviously, Family Education is doing a good job. Jenny is one case in point.

Jenny wants to come to more classes even though she is no longer a Ministry client. Unfortunately that may not be

possible. She would be considered ‘self-referred’ but with the swath of provincial government funding cuts to MCFD and ultimately to the Family Education program at ACS, people like Jenny and Monique will only be able to attend if the classes have availability after MCFD referrals.

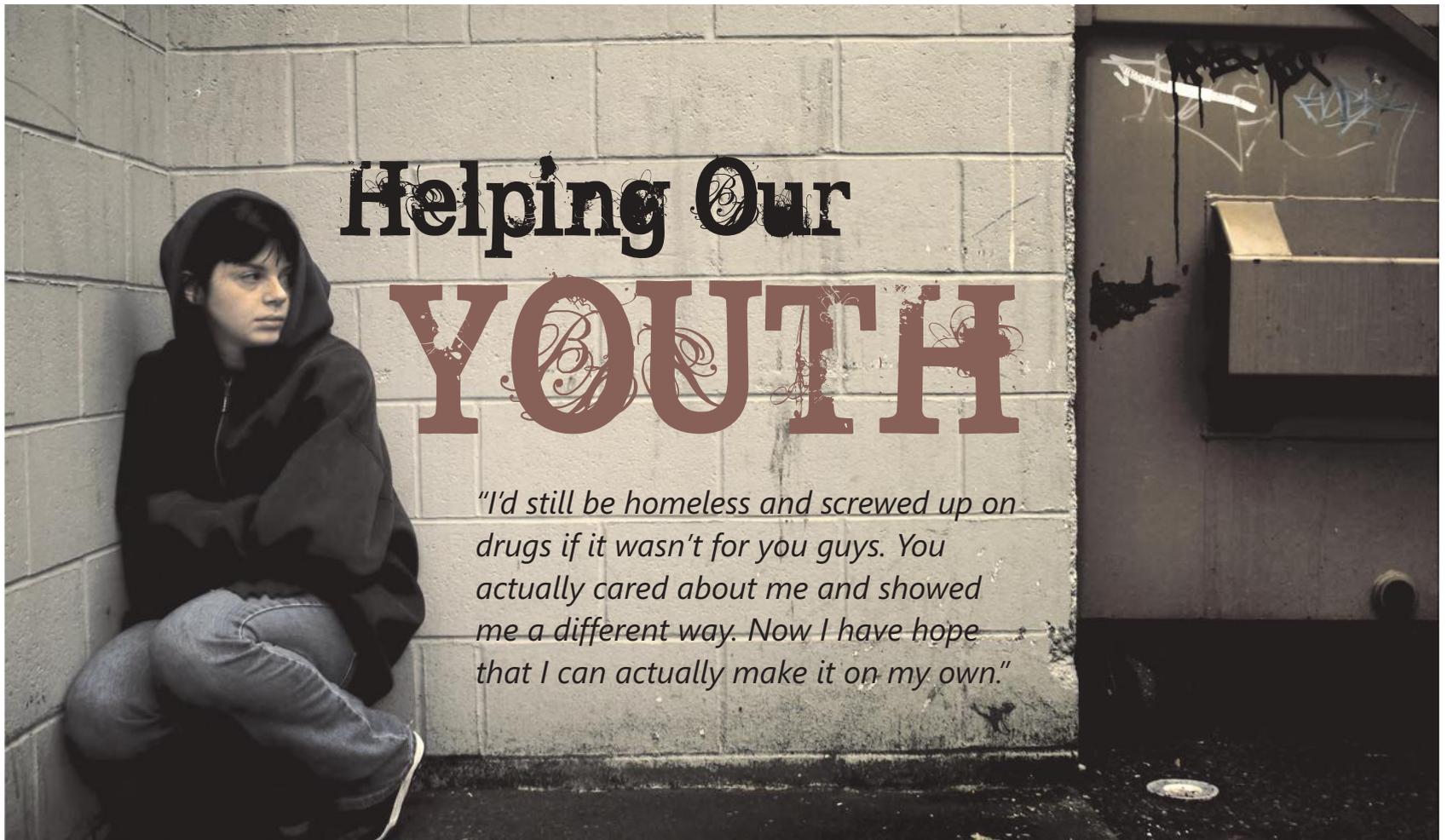
The funding cuts to the Family Education program will result in a reduction of the number of courses offered. This means no more after school programs for children. It also means that the number of spaces for self-referred parents will become very limited.

That is unfortunate because as in the words of Monique, “If I didn’t have the people from here at Family Education to help me,

I don’t know where I’d be; probably on the street or in a psychiatric ward somewhere. This place gives me hope.”

Jenny quickly echoes in, “This place, these people, these programs gave me an alternate route. What you guys give here is like oxygen. I know it’s your job, but honestly, every parent should have to take these programs.”





Helping Our YOUTH

"I'd still be homeless and screwed up on drugs if it wasn't for you guys. You actually cared about me and showed me a different way. Now I have hope that I can actually make it on my own."

If you've lived in chaos all your young life, then that's all you know. At Autumn House we take these kids wherever they are, with whatever baggage they have and we work together to move them forward so that they can live on their own in the community and become productive members of our society."

- Becca Hayes, Transition Housing Outreach Worker

Abbotsford Community Services operates Autumn House, an eight unit apartment style complex at a confidential Abbotsford location. In partnership with Abbotsford MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) the program focuses on youth aged 16 – 18 who are 'in transition'. These are youth with addictions, they have suffered sexual exploitation, been involved in criminal activity and are on their way to becoming totally 'street-entrenched'.

The most immediate need for these 'at-risk and high-risk' youth is housing.

The challenge for youth outreach workers in the Abbotsford area is finding youth friendly landlords. These kids are on Independent Living Agreements which means the monthly rent gets paid on time.

MCFD makes sure of that. But they also come with a very high level of support and accountability through their youth outreach worker.

John Kuipers is the on-site Youth Mentor. John and Becca recall the situation of one 17 year old who was very addicted and homeless. "Our first goal was to get him stable housing. During his four months at Autumn House we addressed some outstanding court issues, helped him get into detox, worked on family mediation issues together, got him enrolled in Abbotsford Virtual School and eventually found him a spot in a residential treatment centre."

In the words of one former Autumn House resident, "I'd still be homeless and screwed up on drugs if it wasn't for you guys.

You actually cared about me and showed me a different way. Now I have hope that I can actually make it on my own."



Youth Workers, Becca Hayes and John Kuipers

Programs and Services

YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE

(Located in the Old Courthouse Building)

The Youth Resource Centre offers a dynamic collection of services that fit within our "Youth Focused ... Family and Community Minded" philosophy of working with youth aged 12 – 18 years of age.

Independent Living and Youth Agreement Support

Outreach service for youth who live on their own to support them in the transition to independence.

Wrapping Abbotsford Youth With Support (WAYS)

Intensive wrap-around support to street-entrenched, homeless & sexually exploited youth assisting them to leave the criminal lifestyle & engage in pro-social activities.

Education Support

Youth on probation are supported with assistance in academic achievement, personal development and developing family and community connections.

Youth Justice

Intensive support and supervision programs for youth on probation and community work service.

Street Outreach

Support for youth trying to leave street involvement and/or reconnect with family. The focus is on safety, food, shelter, and medical attention.

SEY (Stop Exploiting Youth)

Outreach support for youth who are on the Abbotsford Police Department's ICE list and are (or are at risk of) being sexually exploited.

Parent of Teen Group

Tools and strategies for effective parenting.

Youth Mentorship Project

Youth are matched with positive role models to increase their resilience & success.

Teen Groups

A series of gender-based groups that address issues which cause conflict for youth. Topics include self-esteem, self-care, anger management, conflict resolution & critical thinking.

Family Outreach

Individualized service for youth and families experiencing conflict (Communication skills, conflict resolution, connections to community resources).



It's their JOB

Laura Midan – Recycling Program
Education Coordinator

What do you enjoy most about your job? I really enjoy working with people and the neat thing is that there is always something different to do. I am usually out doing something different every single day. One day it's a community event, the next it might be consulting with a business and then another day I'm out doing a school presentation.

What is the biggest challenge? I keep hearing people say, "I've lived in Abbotsford or Mission all my life but I didn't know I could recycle that and put it in my blue bag." It really hasn't changed much over the years so I just have to keep repeating the same information over and over. (For a complete list of items you can recycle – turn to page 25.)

What are two of the most important things you want people to know or remember? First of all I want everyone to know that it really does make a difference. Recycling is making our earth a cleaner place to live by saving space in landfills. And secondly, people should remember to make sure their recyclable items are clean and dry.



Laura shows off a very popular t-shirt

Abbotsford Community Services Voted One of Canada's Top 50 Greenest Employers

Canada's Greenest Employers competition recognizes organizations that have created a culture of environmental awareness. The Mediacorp editors of Canada's Top 100 Employers select the winners for Canada's Greenest Employers based on four main criteria:

1. Environmental initiatives and programs developed
2. Organization's success in reducing their environmental footprint
3. Involvement of employees in the program
4. Extent to which these initiatives are linked to the employer's public identity and whether they attract new people to the organization

To see the reasons ACS was chosen as one of Canada's Greenest Employers visit:
<http://www.eluta.ca/green-at-abbotsford-community-services>



Jeff McLean –
Father Support Worker

What do you enjoy most about your job? I love seeing the children of the dads I am working with – it fuels my drive to help the dads succeed in their role as a father. I also enjoy how powerful it is when dads have someone say to them, “I think you have what it takes to do this.” So many of the dads I work with hear a lot of negative comments about their interactions with their child. In the same fashion as the saying goes, it takes 10 positives to erase a negative; the same is true in reverse when all they hear is negatives. An encouraging word goes a long way.

What is the biggest challenge? Initially getting dads through the door is one of my biggest challenges, along with building some initial trust and respect. Once they are in and get a taste of the community here, they are usually pleasantly surprised at how good and empowering it feels.

What do you want people to know about the dads you work with?

If a child has an involved father in his life, that child is 75% less likely to spend time in jail. This one statistic alone has given me reason to continue to serve the fathers of our community. 99.99% of dads love their kids just as much as the mothers do; they just interact with them differently. And that is not a liability, it is actually an asset.

What is the single most important factor to being a successful dad? Hands down – respecting and supporting the mother of your children.



Jeff takes some time out with his own family

NEW BEGINNINGS FATHER INVOLVEMENT includes:
Parenting Courses: Anger Awareness & Nobody’s Perfect
Education: Supporting fathers who want to complete high school or upgrade for college/university
Monday Night: Recreational floor hockey
My Daddy and Me: a Saturday morning drop-in
Support: Confidential one-on-one
To Learn More: go to www.abbydads.com



Listing of Programs & Services

Recycling Program

Recycling, education and composting

More Info on Page 25

Addictions, Advocacy & Anti-Poverty

Community Legal Advocacy Centre – information, referrals & representation on Income Assistance, housing, employment & CPP issues

Food Bank – see a complete listing of services on Page 14

Dental Clinic – free basic dental services for qualified applicants through the Food Bank

Christmas Bureau – food hampers & gifts for residents in temporary crisis during the Christmas season

Legal Aid – applications taken for criminal & family legal aid matters

Specialized Victim Assistance – court orientation and support for victims of violence & abuse in Abbotsford & Mission (also offered in Hindi & Punjabi)

Domestic Violence Unit – working in collaboration with the Abbotsford Police Department

Abbotsford Addictions Centre – alcohol and drug counselling, recovery & support groups and referrals to treatment

Counselling, Youth & Family Support

Family Guidance – intensive family counselling for troubled children & families (MCFD Referrals)

Basic Lifeskills Training (BLT) – outreach support for youth living with mental illness (Langley Child & Youth Mental Health Referrals)

Rapid Response/Family Development Response – supporting families in need of intensive services (MCFD Referrals)

Youth Resource Centre – see a complete listing of services on Page 29

Sentinel Group Home – temporary residential structured living for co-ed youth aged 13-18 (MCFD & Xyolhemeylh Child & Family Services Referrals)

Family Outreach – in-home & community support to strengthen families and address parenting concerns and family relationships (MCFD Referrals)

Family Connections – monitored parental visitation for children in care, support to teach basic lifeskills & home management, in-home & community outreach supporting parents with children in care (MCFD Referrals)

Abuse Counselling & Support – Sexual Abuse Intervention offers counselling for children aged 3-18 & support to non-offending parents / Stopping the Violence offers group & individual counselling for adult female survivors of sexual abuse (Open Referrals)

Caregiver (Foster Parent) Support – support & advocacy to foster parents and 'out-of-care' caregivers (Open Referrals)

Family Education – offers a variety of parenting classes for families with children aged 0-12 with childcare programs while parents attend group (MCFD & Open Referrals for families on low income)

continued

Immigrants & the Multicultural Community

English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) – ESL classes for adult immigrants in Abbotsford & Mission (no cost, self-referral)

Legal Advocacy – assists agricultural workers with legal issues related to employment (no cost, self-referral)

Immigrant Settlement – provides newcomers with information about BC society, guidance & support on personal & family adjustment issues (no cost)

Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS) – provides support and liaise between school and home for newcomer students and families (no cost)

Enhancing Harmony ITFAK – respectful relationship counselling for men focusing on prevention of family violence (Community Corrections Referral)

Village of Men – individual & group support for men trying to form healthy relationships (no cost, self-referral)

Translation and Interpretation – services provided in over 35 languages specializing in legal, medical, agricultural and technical terminology (fee for service)

Immigrant Family Connections – information, support and ESL for Sudanese families (no cost)

Host – friendship based program bringing together newcomers and Canadians to learn about Canadian culture, Abbotsford and practice speaking English (no cost)

Employment Mentoring – building connections between Canadian business mentors and professional immigrant adults wanting employment information in Canada (no cost)

Child Care Subsidy – information, assistance and referrals for immigrant families with young children (no cost)

Immigrant Seniors – service for immigrant seniors assisting them with adaptation and settlement issues (no cost)

Diversity Education and Resources (DEARS) – educational workshops on diversity related topics and responding to racism and discrimination (no cost)

Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition – community members working together responding to incidents of discrimination and hate (no cost)

Safe Harbour – encourages local businesses to give equitable treatment to customers, providing a safe place for those who have been mistreated (no cost)

BC Employment (BCEP) – support for permanent resident immigrants on Income Assistance looking for employment (no cost)

More Programs Listed on Page 21

Seniors

Crossing Guards – adults patrolling school crosswalks to ensure children's safety

Computer Classes – training for adults & seniors by professional instructors in our computer lab

Community Access – free public access to computers with high speed Internet connections

Community Information Resource – help for seniors with forms, information and referrals to community resources

Community Kitchen – open to community groups wishing to learn or to teach others how to plan and prepare budget-friendly healthy meals

Income Tax Preparation – trained volunteers assist with the completion of Income Tax forms (by donation)

Lunch with the Bunch – fun, food and friendship for seniors every Monday, transportation provided (fee for service)

Meals on Wheels – hot, nutritious meals delivered five days a week for people unable to shop or cook for themselves (fee for service)

Medical Transportation – transportation for medical appointments (fee for service)

Abbotsford Community Services

April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

RECEIPTS	2009-2010	2008-2009
Provincial Government	\$8,093,532	\$7,490,883
Federal Government	500,223	293,159
Recycling	2,427,154	2,348,248
Donations	950,666	808,166
Gift in Kind	1,199,255	1,098,797
Volunteer Hours	557,057	449,780
Bingo, Direct Access & BC 150 Grants	213,139	223,541
Fees and Other	1,920,543	1,955,805
Deferred revenue - for Capital Purchases	1,574	7,302
Deferred revenue - for Operating Expenses	158,727	251,876
Gain (Loss) on disposal of capital assets	0	200
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$16,021,870	\$14,927,757
DISBURSEMENTS		
Wages and Related Costs	11,115,683	10,353,898
Facilities & Equipment	735,936	705,350
Office Operations	373,293	369,549
Other Program Costs	1,026,591	1,043,162
Distribution of Gift in Kind	1,756,312	1,548,577
Transfer to Vancouver Foundation	10,662	400
Amortization of Capital Assets	474,753	493,175
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$15,493,230	\$14,514,111
NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM OPERATIONS	\$528,640	\$413,646

ENDOWMENT FUNDS WITH:

Vancouver Foundation	\$658,864
Abbotsford Foundation	86,034
TOTAL:	\$744,898



Final Thoughts

Fostering Community Well-being And Social Justice In A New Decade

- Chosen in 2010 as one of Canada's top 50 greenest employers!
- Recently invited by School District No.34 to partner in the soon-to-be-built Neighbourhood Learning Centre at the new Abbotsford Collegiate site.
- Originator of the annual Cultural Diversity Awards and the Diversity Health Fair.
- Our recycling depot processes every curb-side blue bag in Abbotsford and Mission.
- Our school crossing guards assist children to get to-and-from school at nineteen of the most hazardous school crosswalks in the city.
- We match numerous caring volunteer mentors with: street-involved youth in need of healthy role models; newly arrived immigrants who long to develop language/cultural/employment/general life skills; low-income families striving for economic stability (because having healthy attachments is vital to ensuring healthy independence & interdependence).

Abbotsford Community Services is an extraordinary team of 350 staff and over 1,400 volunteers who – together – foster community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership. I consider it the greatest privilege and responsibility to have become a part of this caring, dynamic, and exceptional family.

Be it through the hundreds of seniors and low income families who receive free income tax preparation from our volunteers, the teen moms who are supported to complete their high school diplomas, all the children whose worldview on environmental responsibility is forever changed, the individuals with developmental disabilities who come to believe that they have something great to contribute, the newcomers who are invited into community, or the other 37,000 individuals and families (last year alone) that we assisted to achieve their identified goals, Abbotsford Community Services plays a crucial role in helping to create a healthy, safe & caring community where everybody feels like they belong and can contribute.

We've entered a new decade. It's a season to reflect upon what we've successfully completed, what can be done better, and what's yet to be accomplished. The agency recently identified our 2011 – 2013 Strategic Plan. Our key focus areas are to:

1. Develop sustainable and diversified funding
2. Enhance strategic partnerships & relationships – internal and external
3. Build community ownership for ACS mission and services
4. Strengthen ACS infrastructure
5. Ensure programs/services are relevant to community needs & issues

I thank all the dedicated staff, board, volunteers, donors, and community partners who contribute their expertise, time, finances and many other resources towards the transformation of individual lives and the entire community. Together, we can make our community one where: no one goes hungry or homeless; children, youth and families thrive; people feel safe; we are wise stewards of our resources; and everyone belongs.

Rod Santiago
Executive Director

Abbotsford Community Services

2420 Montrose Avenue
Abbotsford, BC V2S 3S9
604.859.7681

www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com

With thanks to all our funders:
local, provincial & federal government
community service organizations,
foundations and our loyal donors

Some ACS programs receive
Direct Access and Bingo Affiliation funding
from the Province of British Columbia

Member of

