



Stories of People Helping People

This is my ninth year on the Board of Abbotsford Community Services, and it's an organization I couldn't be prouder to serve.

I would like to extend special thanks to long-serving Board members Russ Bleackley, Gerry Palmer, Dr. Elizabeth Watt, Barry Griffiths, Christine Lane and David Smith, who have given so generously of their time and talent over the past years. Along with "newer" board members, we all share a dedication to the wide-ranging services ACS offers to make the community of Abbotsford a better place.

ACS has worked diligently over the past year to implement the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, with its particular focus on building and enhancing partnerships within the community. I think our new Executive Director, Rod Santiago, must have met with everyone in Abbotsford by now! We are currently engaged in projects not only with the City and the School District of Abbotsford, but with a great many other service agencies in our region.

This winter ACS went through another CARF evaluation (the external international organization that accredits social service agencies), and passed with flying colours. To quote from the summary of the CARF report, "Persons served by ACS are treated with dignity and respect by competent, caring and dedicated staff member. . . ACS has a healthy and vibrant culture that honours its mission and core values. . . The business practices of the organization are efficient and effective and operate within a framework of ethical best practice that sets the stage for excellent service delivery." On behalf of the Board, I congratulate all the staff and managers for their fine work. Clearly, we are not the only ones who have recognized their excellence.

I know I've said this before, but thank you a thousand times to our many volunteers and donors. The work that we do just couldn't exist in your absence. This year we are looking into the grim faces of provincial and federal governments who talk about austerity and program cuts, and even though our own relationships with government bodies are proven and cordial, the future of some of our programs feels uncertain. We are therefore increasingly dependent on fund-raised dollars, and on your gracious gifts of time and money.

Our newest board member, Darlynnda Ross, recently commented that when she sees the Abbotsford Community Services logo, with the initials ACS, she thinks of three words: Assistance, Care, and Support. To me, this seemed an astute perception of the special role this agency plays in the community. As board members, we represent you, the community, and in turn we represent the agency to the community—ambassadors of a sort. We champion the work of ACS, and are always ready to listen to your suggestions.

Join us in embracing ACS as your community services, and become one of the many people helping people.

Dr. Virginia Cooke
Board President



The agency that never sleeps.

Some metropolitan areas such as Bombay, Cairo and New York are dubbed "the city that never sleeps". The activity and bustle in these places rarely slows down. This past year ACS could accurately have been dubbed "the agency that never sleeps". Indeed, at Abbotsford Community Services we run over 70 programs all across our community that help people at every stage of life ... through any circumstance of life: from women escaping violence to youth overcoming addictions, we help people in crises; from new Canadians to individuals with development disabilities, we help people to belong; from newborn babies to seniors, we help people of all ages.

The stories we've highlighted give you a taste of the depth and breadth of ACS's impact upon the people who make up our community. In reading Melissa, Musab, Cody, LiQing, Laura, Raman and Greg's stories I hope that the recurring themes of Being Respected, Receiving Timely Help, Not Feeling Alone or Judged, Knowing You're Safe, Gaining Confidence, Acquiring Knowledge, and Giving Back to Others serve as reminders that we belong to a GREAT community.

That great-ness is evidenced by the best staff and volunteers that I have ever been privileged to dream of and work with. I love and respect you guys dearly! And in the event that I am accused of being biased, I have it on the good authority of numerous community partners, donors and clients that my opinion is widely shared.

Further, ACS recently earned another Three-year Accreditation through CARF International including identification of 2.5 pages worth of strengths and receiving such commendation as: "ACS operates a wide array of programs and services that are highly valued and appreciated by all stakeholders of the organization, particularly clients, families and the community at large. Services are person centered and flexible and are delivered in sensitive, thoughtful ways by caring and dedicated staff members."

We never take it for granted that ACS's essential work is only possible through the continued support – time, expertise, finances – of funders, individuals, groups and businesses in the community. Thank you for continuing to invest in the present and future of our community by investing in Abbotsford Community Services mission of fostering community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership.

Together, we can.

Rod Santiago
Executive Director



Abbotsford Community Services

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It Hasn't Been Easy, But *Look At Me* Now!

Melissa never really understood what people meant when they talked about abuse until she was in grade six. She had been sexually abused by a family member beginning at the age of three. Brand new Barbie dolls, special treats and fun outings were the bribes used to keep her from telling.

When it was no longer safe to be at home, Melissa's grandmother would take her in but even though she was supportive and loving, she discouraged her from talking about the abuse. Other family members also pleaded for Melissa to keep quiet for fear that exposure would tear the family apart.

At one point she moved back home and assumed the role of the abused again to keep another sibling safe from becoming the next victim.

After the perpetrator had left the home, Melissa was constantly afraid; afraid to go into the basement, afraid of the dark, afraid to be alone. She was no longer comfortable in that one place children should feel safe, loved and cared for.

At one point she went to live with a cousin who got her involved in drugs and working in the sex trade. "It was a horrible experience. I did the drugs and other self harm things to numb the feelings and the pain inside."

She began to see a mental health counsellor whom she credits for changing her life. She talked to a school counsellor every day who helped her realize the difference between reality and fantasy. And finally, when her mental health worker referred her to Autumn House, she felt completely comfortable.

Transitional Housing Outreach Worker Becca Hays and MCFD's Onsite Youth Mentor John Kuipers have both become true mentors to Melissa. "I often felt like I didn't want to be alive anymore; the pain was too much, there was so much I didn't understand and friends were so judgmental."

At **Autumn House** she felt like she could open up and talk honestly about her past. "Autumn House gave me a structured environment and I was scared to disobey any of the rules. I became a pretty good person here; it was easy because I knew that these people (Becca & John) cared about me. I know I am not alone anymore."

"They came to lots of appointments with me and gave me tons of support. I was committed to staying clean, sober and safe because I didn't want to become like my abuser. I did not want to be angry like him."

Through it all, Melissa managed to complete her high school education. It was her sheer determination to prove that no matter what had happened, she was still prepared to fulfill her goals and aspirations.

"It hasn't been easy for me but that's life I guess." She says it's her new friends, her support network, her therapist and people like Becca and John that make each day worth living.

As a young adult now, Melissa talks openly about her time in foster care, her struggles with self-harm behaviours and her rebellion during her early teen years. She remembers one family member reacting to her story by saying that, "He abused you because you deserved it." But the fact is no child deserves to be sexually abused.

"I may be stuck sometimes but I know I will be in a great place some day, maybe one day I'll be married and have a good job. Who knows, maybe I'll become a youth worker myself."

Today Melissa lives in an apartment on her own and she is very proud of that fact. Slowly but surely the fear of the dark places is being pushed away by her growing self-confidence.

Her advice to her youth who are struggling through difficult situations is simple.

Seek help! You are not alone even though you think you are. There are so many supports out there, so many resources and you do not have to go through stuff on your own. You can't do it alone and you can't keep pushing people away because of your fears. You can get help, and you can make it!"

"Look at me," she says with a great big smile. "I'm living a great life now!"

Melissa is now able to speak on her own behalf and to advocate for herself in order to get the help and services she needs. She has since shared her experience at the Community Dialogues on the topic of Inclusion hosted by the Diversity Education and Resource Services program. "I want people to know what happened to me, and I want them to know there is help."



About Autumn House

A partnership between MCFD and ACS, Autumn House is a Semi-Independent Housing Program for youth ages 16-19. Youth referred to Autumn House are in transition and in need of extra support in developing independent living skills. At Autumn House residents are supported in many ways. A Youth Worker helps residents in the development of independent living skills through a designed curriculum with connections to resources in the community. The onsite Youth Mentor assists residents with whatever they need during the evening and on weekends.

The Autumn House Program is designed for six month stays while residents work on the program curriculum and the individual service plans designed by the youth, their Social Worker, their Youth Outreach Worker, Youth Mentor and other persons on their care team.

The goal of the program is for residents to be able to confidently transition into living in their own apartment or basement suite in the community.

How Can You Help Autumn House?

Your financial donations will help us purchase necessary household items like:

- Cleaning supplies
- Brooms, mops, buckets
- Light bulbs
- Bag-less vacuum cleaner
- Toiletry kits and personal grooming items for male and female youth

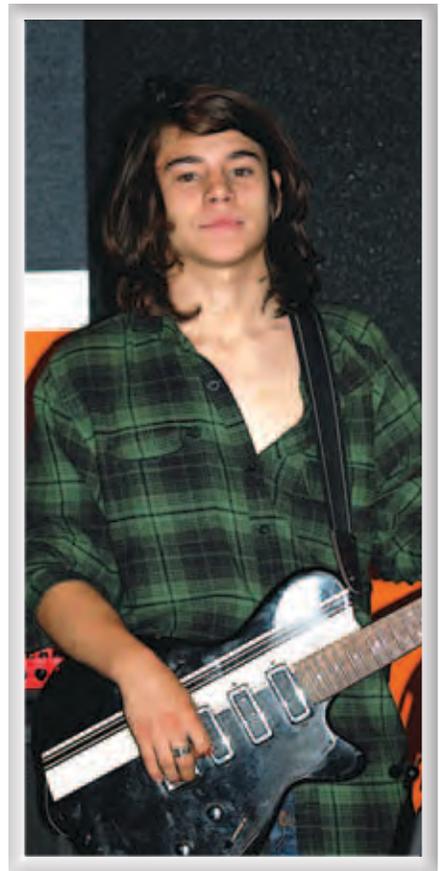
To make a donation:

Log on to the AbbotsfordCommunityServices.com website and click on the CanadaHelps Donate Button on our home page.

You can also mail or drop off your donation at 2420 Montrose Avenue, Abbotsford BC V2S 3S9

BLT "tribe" empowers youth

Asplin says BLT (Basic Lifeskills Training) is different from many places in that the goal here is to coach and guide these youth through this thing called life. "So many people in all sorts of programs talk to you but they don't walk with you. Walking with you looks like dealing with the realities of death and other forms of loss. That's the biggest difference right there. Here at BLT we take the time to be with these guys. I want to be there with these guys when they succeed and when they fail."



»» **M**y anger got out of control and at school I'd be suspended every other week," says 16 year old Cody. "I didn't like the way people talked about me and my family or my disabled sister so I'd get angry. If someone tried to pick on me or belittle me I'd go after them to beat them up. Then I'd get even angrier when a teacher would try to restrain me."

But at the Basic Lifeskills Training (BLT) program, he talks about things instead of getting angry. ACS Youth Workers Kerry Asplin and James Hogben, just listen to him as he unloads his thoughts and angry feelings about things that happen at home or at school.

That's what BLT is about according to Hogben. "Being real, not judging these guys, just talking; that's what's important here. We keep it pretty simple and focus on what's going on for them right now. We don't dwell on or even dig into the past. What's important is what's going on for these kids right now, today."

For 16 year old Cody, knowing that BLT is a place he can come to, knowing that there is someone around to simply listen without any judgment, is reason enough to keep coming back.

"One of the best pieces of advice I got here," says Cody, "is to just walk away. That's what I try to do now when I get angry at someone; I remember the best thing is to just walk away."

"I have never really talked to anyone the way I talk to these guys," says 21 year old Kevin. "I've been through every counselling agency around here and I just couldn't deal with it. They all wanted me to talk about stuff I wasn't ready to talk about. But these guys don't push it; they just wait until I'm ready."

Another part of BLT is advocacy. "Sometimes we are the voice for these guys. Attachment is the key to working successfully with them. Mainstream school doesn't work for a lot of these kids. Experiential learning is what works here. Many of the kids are very gifted in other ways like music and art."

Shane has been a part of BLT for about three years and most days you will find him playing his guitar. "Everybody listens to music," he says. "It's a good expression for a lot of our negative energy. I like it here because it's safe to be here; kind of like a get-away place to hang out."

Early in 2011 MCFD made some funds available to the BLT program and asked for their input. "They asked us what we would or could do with the extra money," says Asplin. "There was no question. We wanted to build a little music studio and get some decent instruments in here." So that's exactly what happened.

With the help of Rob, a therapeutic arts instructor and former school counsellor at Apex School, they created a sound proof music room. He believes music is a way of fast forwarding the process of getting to know someone. "You can learn a lot about these

guys by listening to their music. Sometimes the lyrics in a song say exactly what they can't express themselves. I look at Shane and realize that he is learning about his own identity through his music."

Cody doesn't play any instruments or sing, but he says he can picture himself in the lyrics of certain songs.

Seventeen year old Jen is very quiet and while her answers are soft spoken she seems very sure of what she wants to say. "It's so much better here at BLT in dealing with all my anxiety and its way better than any therapy or medications I've tried before." For Jen, the music aspect of BLT is very calming and relaxing. "It takes my mind off of things."

Jen has come a very long way says Asplin. "Extreme anxiety was the biggest issue for Jen but now she's expressing her opinions more often, she's learning how to say no, she participates in small group settings and she's beginning to get out more, she's even taken steps to trying out new ethnic foods lately."

What is success for BLT participants? According to Asplin it means keeping the connection alive, meaning they keep coming back; they feel like they can keep coming back no matter what's going on for them. "I was just talking with a 29 year old woman who proudly told me she has a good job and is pregnant with her first child. She was a BLT participant when she was 15 years old."

Youth seek more role modeling rather than peer attachment but peer attachment is often the only thing available to them. "We let the

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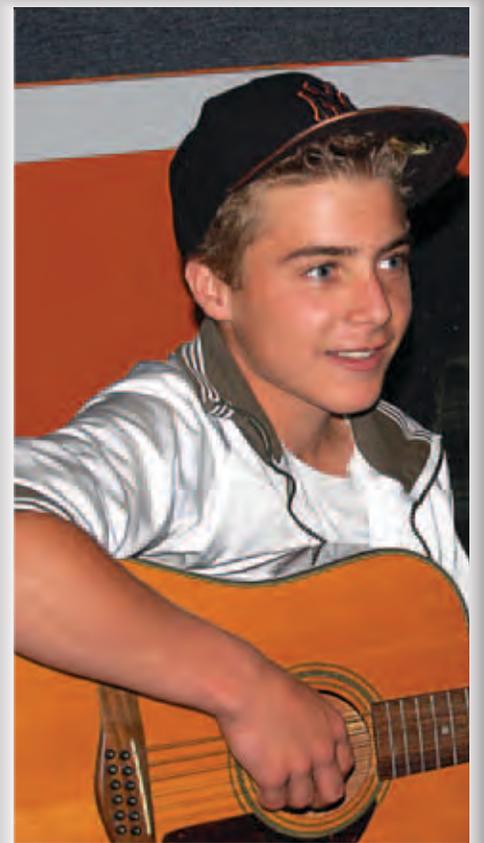
» Lots of these kids have labels put on them, says Hogben. And with any label comes judgment. There are no labels here, no judgment, just a lot of doing things together and talking about the realities of life.«

»It's great at BLT because I've made more progress here than anywhere else. I'm gaining confidence, I'm calmer now and I can carry on a normal conversation with people. I couldn't do that before.«



»They helped me see hope for the first time and this is the first place I feel like I can be honest about my life and these guys will listen and trust me.«

»Our counsellors really care about us and don't abandon us when we have trouble.«



Viewing addictions >>>
through the lens
of an 18 year
old female BLT
participant

>>> kids determine the path,” says Asplin. “We let them tell us what they think they need to move forward in their lives. They all realize they need support and to work on communication and other life skills.”
“Our job at BLT is to empower youth to heal through building healthy attachments while using a holistic approach. The number one thing we help these kids deal with is loss.” On the wall hang various painted art pieces created by BLT participants expressing exactly what he has been talking about. One depicts a roadmap of loss:

Loss of power / loss of control / Loss of parents through divorce or death / Loss of innocence / Loss of stability in the home / Loss of education through constantly changing schools / Loss of friendships / Loss of objects that were once really important / Loss of health (STDs, injury, chronic illness)

BLT youth are all Child and Youth Mental Health referrals, meaning they all have mental illness or are developing mental illness from the results of repeated Post Traumatic Stress.

To sum up the attitude of how the BLT youth feel about the program, Shane says, “You guys are like the elders of our tribe.” Asplin and Hogben like that assessment because as we’ve often heard, “It takes a village, or in this case, a tribe to raise a child.”



About the Program

ACS has operated the Basic Lifeskills Training program at a storefront Langley location for 18 years. It is a safe place for youth ages 14-21 living with mental illness to meet and build skills through support, education and recreation.

BLT provides individual outreach and group support to participants who are referred by MCFD. The program focuses on lifeskills training for transition, employment and independent living. Attention is given to communication, conflict resolution and relationship skill building.

How You Can Help BLT

Your financial donations will help us purchase:

- Grocery store gift cards, bus tickets
- Recreation centre passes
- Employment opportunities for youth
- Musical instruments
- Lunches, coffee and healthy snacks

To Make a Donation

Log on to the AbbotsfordCommunityServices.com site and click on the CanadaHelps Donate Button on our home page.

You can also mail or drop off your donation at 2420 Montrose Avenue, Abbotsford BC V2S 3S9

*Four years ago
I was a raging drug addict.*



A journey from jail to ...

At 17 years of age Crystal got into a lifestyle that landed her in and out of jail for trafficking drugs. After many failed attempts at making positive life changes she was blessed with all the reason in the world to change that lifestyle once and for all. She was pregnant.

"I finally realized I was sick of that life and I knew I would want to keep my baby and if I didn't, I might never clean up," she says. "I had a future to think about now and the health of a baby and myself."

Many in society assume that individuals in the drug lifestyle come from dysfunctional homes with troubled childhoods. "I had a great home life and I never had any childhood needs that were not met. I come from a stable home with parents that loved me. She doesn't like to dwell on that part of her life and why should she. Her two year old son Cole keeps her busy and occupied with other things.

During her pregnancy Crystal gained over 100 pounds and when Cole was born she focused all her attention and energy on him and his well-being and ended up neglecting herself, her post partum depression and her physical shape. But with the help of programs offered at Family Centre and taking up a fitness challenge at Fusion Fitness her life changed dramatically.

Attending the Community Drop-in sessions helped her to establish normal friendships. The Post Partum Depression groups helped her to deal with stress and through Best for Babies she was reminded of the importance of healthy eating for herself and her baby.

She lost 21 pounds and 22 inches in the Fusion Fitness Challenge and a further 33 pounds and 37 inches while participating in the Make-over Challenge. These achievements gave her a taste of the lifestyle she was capable of reaching.

Combined with everything she was learning through the Parent Project and Nobody's Perfect classes, "I was learning how to take care of myself again and how to take care of Cole." She says many of the ACS programs offered for her were equally beneficial for Cole as he was learning how to interact with other young children.

"Now I look and feel like a pretty normal person and a pretty good mom, and I'm excited about our future. I am proud of the mother I am and the woman I am becoming," she says with a warm and grateful smile.

Crystal is very thankful to her parents who have been so supportive and a huge help. "And with the help of all the programs I know about now at Community Services and have had the privilege to participate in, I had the confidence to enroll in a Business Administration program at UFV. My goal is to specialize in Human Resource Management."

Crystal begins university classes in September 2011.

About Family Centre

Located in the Old Courthouse on Laurel Street, Family Centre is a warm and comfortable place where adults and children can play together, meet new friends, gain new skills and share ideas. Through formal classes and informal drop-ins, these services offer friendly, supportive opportunities in an environment which encourages a feeling of safety and well-being.

For more information, call 604.859.7681 Ext. 266



university

How You Can Help

Make a Financial Donation to sustain current program offerings by Logging on to the AbbotsfordCommunityServices.com website and click on the CanadaHelps button on our Home Page, or mail or drop off your gift at 2420 Montrose Avenue, Abbotsford, BC V2S 3S9



A Place for Youth

to tell us anything and everything

»When you ask why she wouldn't want to go to another mainstream medical clinic, with raised eyebrows she asks, "Are you kidding? These ladies right here (Dr. Elizabeth Watt, Dr. Cindy Shaw, Dr. Consuelo Kinahan and Krista) are looking out for me. They take the time to follow up and actually get to know us. They are working for the public; they're working for us - young people. This place is great! This place is needed!«

The door opens and another young woman walks confidently through the door at the temporary location of the Abbotsford Youth Health Centre (AYHC).

She is greeted with big smiles and a friendly echo from Intake and Reception Coordinator Krista Kenessey and Intake Volunteer Tim Walters who are organizing an ever growing number of patient files. "Hey, it's so good to see you!"

Laura has been here before and in her words, "Every town in the world needs a place like this (for youth)! Right from the very first time I came here I felt totally at home."

Laura was in a car accident over a year ago and has been plagued with back pain ever since. "Here they

actually look at you, listen and talk to you. They even talk about your past and medical history to figure out what's actually going on. The doctors here always take the time to make sure I understand exactly what they're telling me. I come here because I know I will be treated with respect; I feel safe to be myself and to tell all the embarrassing details here."

Youth Friendly Environment

The atmosphere is casual, welcoming and most definitely 'youth friendly'. Everyone is offered water, juice and whatever snacks happen to be on hand. A group of teenage boys come in with their Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) youth worker and before they leave, help themselves to condoms at the front



»With the results that we've had – reaching youth who have never seen a doctor in their lives, fast-tracking youth to urgent, life saving treatment for conditions that were caught during our in-depth intake process – we know the service we're providing is not only meeting a need in the community, but it's also resulting in significant cost-savings to the medical system by identifying developing conditions before they become crises.«

desk. There is no judgment here and everyone is comfortable to talk about anything that's on their minds.

The door opens again and two sisters come in with another ACS staffer who works with the Immigrant Youth and Young Adults program. The 20-year old says she feels more comfortable here than at her family physician's office. "The way they talk to you and treat you here, it makes you feel like they have known you a long time. That's nice."

She needed to have some paperwork completed to submit with an application to Vancouver Career College for admittance into the LPN program. Her 19-year old sister had some medical concerns to discuss with a physician, so they came to the Tuesday afternoon drop-in and left about 45 minutes later with everything looked after.

No appointments are necessary which makes it more convenient for young people. What's not so convenient is that the AYHC operates only one afternoon a week at this time. "Hopefully, one day, we will be open every afternoon so that these young people will have a welcoming place to go when they need help," says Dr. Watt.

Educating Youth about Their Health

Something Krista hears from youth almost every week is that they do not feel like they are welcome at mainstream medical offices. "Many of the young people that drop in to the AYHC are marginalized in one way or another and it's simply more comfortable for them to be in an environment, a waiting room, which is full of their peers instead of adults who might be judgmental or critical of who they are. Many of these kids feel like adults just don't want them

around," she says. "But here at the AYHC, they are being empowered and educated about their health. That's important."

"When we began none of us knew for sure how much demand there would be," says Dr. Watt. "But that question was quickly answered. There have been days where, even with myself and a UBC Family Practice Resident both seeing patients, we haven't been able to see all the youth who have come for services."

Since the opening of the AYHC preliminary data has been collected from youth and young adults (aged 12-24) many of whom are aging out of the youth care system. Nearly 150 individuals have been served in over 200 appointments operating only four hours per week.

Need for Permanent Location

The AYHC has been operating at temporary locations since operations began in November 2010. Dr. Jacques West generously arranged space for the centre at his McCallum Clinic location and when that space was no longer available, the centre moved to a space normally occupied by ACS's English Language Services for Adults. That space was made available during the summer of 2011.

"But we need a permanent home," says Kenessey. "Stability is something that is in short supply for some of the youth we serve."

Starting in September 2011 the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre is slated to become the new temporary home of the AYHC as part of a six month pilot project arranged in collaboration with the Fraser Health Authority.

"The centre is operated through a huge, wide-ranging collaboration of community partners and >>>

In the first six months of operation some alarming statics came to light.

- 39% reported having traded sex for money/valuables
- 71% report depression
- 89% report high or moderate stress
- 29% report self-harm
- Only 43% report feeling in control of their thoughts and actions
- 56% have high or moderate risky substance abuse patterns
- Many youth fear stigmatization if seen seeking a service specifically for mental health, sexual health or substance abuse counselling.



>>> services which is so uplifting and encouraging," says Dr. Watt. "This community is full of people who care. So, where appropriate we want to help youth identify community supports that might be able to help them. At the AYHC, we do all we can to build, strengthen and restore supportive relationships – whether with family, peers, spiritual/religious advisors, school staff, social workers, or whoever else might be important to the youth who come in these doors."

About the AYHC:

- Provides health services in a youth-friendly, safe, confidential and non-judgmental environment for individuals aged 12-24
- Increases young people's knowledge about issues affecting their health
- Provides young people with tools to protect and maintain their health
- Helps youth recognize high risk behaviours, and manage the risks associated with day-to-day living
- Empowers youth to be active participants in their health care
- For more information, visit AYHC.ca

How You Can Help:

- **#1 Wish:** The gift of a house on a bus route in central Abbotsford as a permanent location
- Financial Donations to sustain and increase hours of operation





»If I didn't have this place to come to after school, I would probably be getting into trouble. Coming here feels like a recreation centre where we get to hang out and get awesome help with our school work. I would be frustrated if I didn't have this help.«



Positive **Help** Eases Frustrations

Seventeen year old Musab Athaya has come a long, long way since first coming into the Multicultural & Immigrant Services office on George Ferguson Way. "He hardly ever talked at first," says Palwinder Kelay a Bridging Coach with the Immigrant Youth & Young Adult (IYYA) Program. "Then we saw him slowly blossom and openly share his thoughts. People around him started to see his inner kindness and compassion."

The Athaya family came to Canada from war-torn Sudan. Musab is a student at Abby Collegiate School along with two of his brothers. They experience some form of racism on a daily basis. "Mostly the white kids just won't talk to us," he says, which is why the IYYA program is such a positive influence in his life.

Musab's parents shared some of their own thoughts about life in Canada and raising a family of five children in a new culture.

"Life is easier in Sudan than Canada, Canada is much more complex," says

Mrs. Athaya. "In Sudan we had people to help with the kids like grandparents and extended family. In Canada it is just us, mom and dad. Language is a barrier, so it is hard to help kids with homework. We want our children to make good choices but it is hard."

Daily life is challenging for the Athaya family with no real friends or family in the area. But they both agree that the IYYA program is very positive for their children. "Musab seems happier now and he's making better choices. They (IYYA) help with many things. All three of our boys are doing well and IYYA has supported them with school and social activities. We dream that our kids will make good choices and succeed here in Canada."

The Athaya's have accessed the Immigrant Family Connections and ELSA programs as well.

Thanks to the support they have found at Abbotsford Community Services, the Athaya's believe that a better life is possible for their children and themselves.

About the Program

- ESL/Computer/Literacy Training/Life Skills
- Training for immigrant youth aged 15-25 in Canada less than 5 years
- Strength Based Assessment and Portfolio Development
- Resume Help, and Referrals
- Personal and Career Planning

Located at #5-32700 George Ferguson Way

How Can You Help?

Volunteer to mentor and tutor Immigrant Youth and Young Adults after school, and share with them your valuable education and experience.

For More Information Call

604.859.7544 Ext. 227



Local Businesses Connect with Community Causes that Matter

Greg Bay is energized working with people who love to make a difference.
»I think we all have a responsibility to give back to the community we live in. It is not good enough just to live in a community; you have to actively participate in order to create true community.«





For the last two years the Sport & Spine Physiotherapy on West Railway Avenue has organized a community fundraiser in support of the Abbotsford Food Bank.

“Sport & Spine has always felt a need to create a culture that gives back to the community,” says owner/sports physiotherapist Greg Bay. “We feel it is our responsibility as a team to be actively involved. With the administrative leadership of Kathy Clarke we were able to put together the logistics of the luncheon and get it started.”

The purpose of the annual luncheon is to have an event that is easy to attend. A luncheon idea is perfect as we celebrate our business partner’s donation successes for the month of May and raise money with the auction, 50/50 and other cool ideas. We have a new theme every year and try to have local speakers that can speak to the hearts of the community.

A Whole Community of Support

This year’s guest speaker Canadian Olympic and World Cup Downhill Skier Kelly VanderBeek who talked about her challenges and successes as a professional athlete.

“When I fall down and injure myself I have a whole community that supports me in my recovery. Family, friends, sponsors and the medical team at Sport & Spine all help to get me back up and skiing again. There are lots of children and families that need a hand up too; not a handout, but a hand up to get them back on their feet. That’s why I am proud to be a part of an event like this which supports the local food bank.”



This year’s Food Bank Lunch raised approximately \$8,000 and donated 3,600 pounds of food.

“When our clinic partnered with CBI Health it was easy for us to focus our attention to our neighbours in need. CBI Health clinics across Canada have done a variety of fundraising events in the month of May and raised 360,000 pounds of food and over \$700,000 for

local food banks in the past 7 years. Many of our staff have young families and we all feel a responsibility to do what we can, to help make a difference. There should be no empty bellies!”

Greg would love to see more businesses get involved in this event or create an event of their own to support a local cause. “My good friend Bryan Kinney of Sun Hang Do and I would go to lunch and try to figure out what we could do together to make a difference and we created the concept of the Food Bank luncheon. It’s an opportunity for businesses to participate without having to spend a lot of time. We have the ‘business box’ which is a food bank collection box that is placed in a business for the month of May. This encourages businesses to have ownership at a local level.”

No Empty Shelves

“I passed by a bus stop the other day and there was a gentleman showcasing the bag of food that he received from the Food Bank. Wearing a big smile, he explained his next few meals to his friend. My hope is that there is a day when there is never an empty shelf and I’d love to see more refrigeration capabilities at the Food Bank so our neighbours can receive more healthy fresh fruit and vegetables.

My vision is to have the Food Bank Luncheon concept in every community across Canada.”

Dave Murray, Supervisor of the Abbotsford Food Bank appreciates the time and effort by the business community every year. *“Fundraisers such as the one put on by Sport and Spine are extremely valuable to the Food Bank. They raise a significant amount of funds, they provide the manpower, and they have the ability to leverage their contacts and friends to support the event.”*

Considering a Corporate Event to Raise \$\$ for the Food Bank?

Before you get started, please contact: Dave Murray (604.859.5749) or Janna Dieleman (604.859.7681)

There are a few guidelines we wish to share with you, and be available for your event to build strong, long term connections with all your friends and supporters.

Thank You for everything you do to support the Abbotsford Food Bank and other Community Services programs!

BIG

and small ...



how others are helping to make a difference





Left: It's becoming a Christmas tradition ... an Abbotsford Police and Fire Rescue escort a convoy of vehicles from the Fraser Valley Automall, through central Abbotsford down South Fraser Way, stopping at the Abbotsford Food Bank. All eight dealerships participate in the annual food drive delivering thousands of pounds of food and cash donations.

Above: Members of the Abbotsford Heat Hockey team help unload and sort through boxes of donated supplies.

Hunger Knows No Season

While Christmas is the most philanthropic time of the year at the Food Bank, remember that hunger knows no season. Your financial contributions throughout the year assist our annual operations.



Above: For the last two years Clint & Stella Joiner have invited friends and family to join them in celebrating their daughter's birthday, by asking guests to bring donations of baby food, diapers, toys, clothes, and 'all things baby' to little Bo's party. In turn, the Joiner family passes those donations on to the Best for Babies program.

Best for Babies Program Coordinator Erin Santos, shares a few minutes with mom Stella and Baby Bo explaining why these gifts are so valuable to the program and the women it serves.



867,948 Canadians walked through the front door of a food bank in March 2010 asking for help. That's the highest level of food bank use on record. How did we get here? Could we do more to help? What is the best strategy? There are as many questions ... as Canadians who are hungry.

Source: Canadian Hunger Count 2010 Report found on FoodBanksCanada.ca

Who is **Hungry** in Canada?

While anyone is at risk of food insecurity at some point in their lives, certain groups are particularly vulnerable:

Working Poor

People with jobs constitute the third largest group of food bank clients, at 11.4%. The majority of food bank clients with jobs are employed at low wages. The loss of full-time jobs during recessions and the expansion of the low-wage economy has generated more working poor who are unable to meet basic needs for themselves and their families.

Families with children

Over half of households who turn to a food bank for assistance are families with children. The single parent family is still one of Canada's most economically vulnerable groups.

Persons with Disabilities

Those receiving disability income supports make up the second largest group of food bank users. Disability support is not enough to help clients provide for themselves.

Seniors

Seniors accessing food banks across Canada is a sad reality. Hunger Count 2010 reports that seniors accounted for 7.2 % of adults assisted by food banks in a typical month.

Recipients of Social Assistance

People receiving social assistance as their primary source of income continue to make up the largest group of food bank

clients at 50.5%. Social assistance rates in Canada are not sufficient to ensure food security for low-income Canadians.

QUICK FACTS:

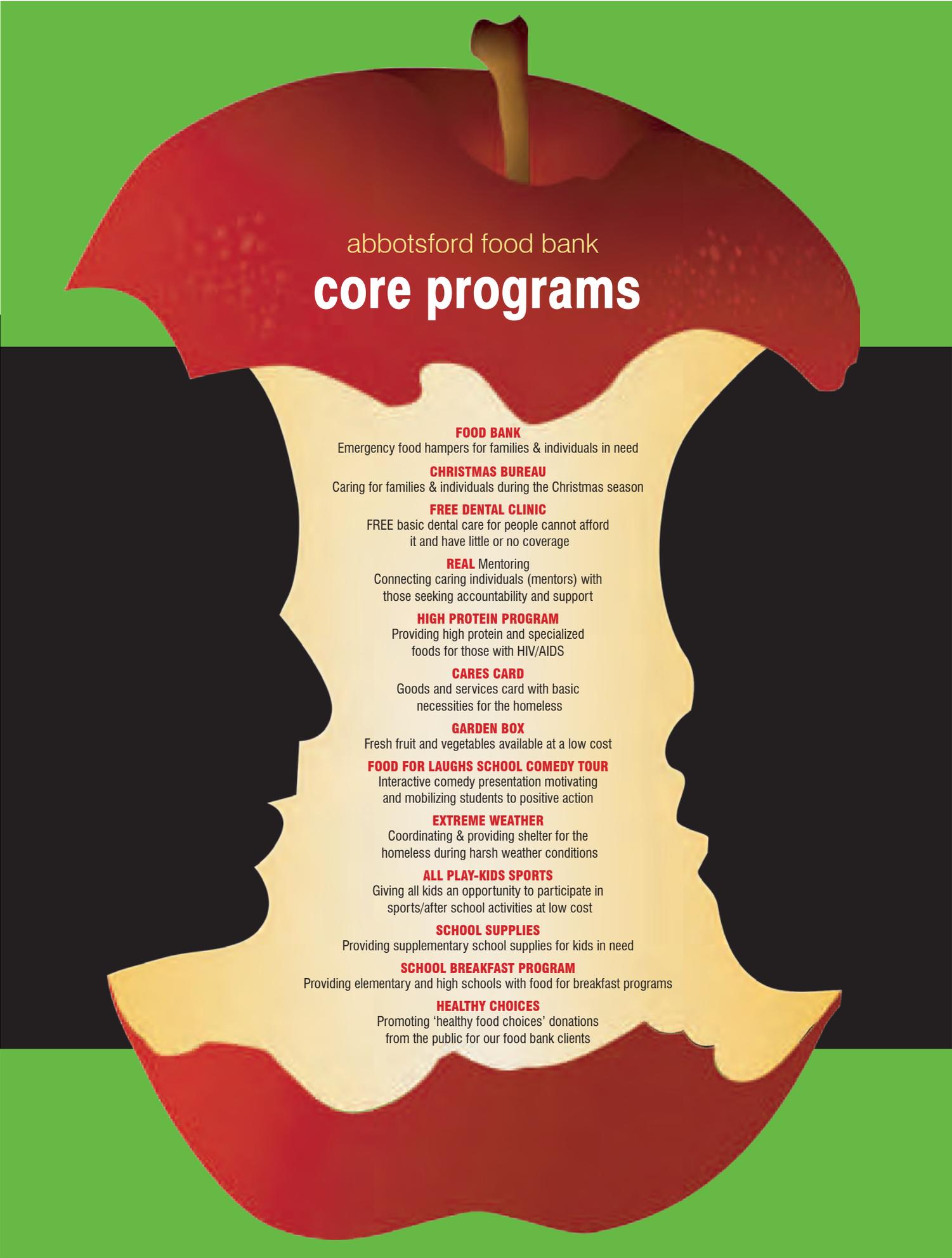
The most recent information from Health Canada shows that 1.9 million people in Canada worry about not having enough food, can't afford to eat the foods they would like, or go without food because they don't have enough for themselves and their families.

In any given year, about 10% of Canadians don't have enough money to make ends meet.

Many of those helped by food banks are in need because they face health issues that prevent them from working on a regular basis.

Abbotsford Food Bank 2010 Statistics

- 57% of clients have no vehicle
- \$15,972 is the average yearly income of clients
- 30% of clients are not working due to mental or physical disabilities, or old age
- 56% of clients spend over half of their income on rent placing them at high risk for homelessness
- 68% of clients have graduated from high school and 45% of these have completed some post-secondary education



abbotsford food bank
core programs

FOOD BANK

Emergency food hampers for families & individuals in need

CHRISTMAS BUREAU

Caring for families & individuals during the Christmas season

FREE DENTAL CLINIC

FREE basic dental care for people cannot afford it and have little or no coverage

REAL Mentoring

Connecting caring individuals (mentors) with those seeking accountability and support

HIGH PROTEIN PROGRAM

Providing high protein and specialized foods for those with HIV/AIDS

CARES CARD

Goods and services card with basic necessities for the homeless

GARDEN BOX

Fresh fruit and vegetables available at a low cost

FOOD FOR LAUGHS SCHOOL COMEDY TOUR

Interactive comedy presentation motivating and mobilizing students to positive action

EXTREME WEATHER

Coordinating & providing shelter for the homeless during harsh weather conditions

ALL PLAY-KIDS SPORTS

Giving all kids an opportunity to participate in sports/after school activities at low cost

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Providing supplementary school supplies for kids in need

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Providing elementary and high schools with food for breakfast programs

HEALTHY CHOICES

Promoting 'healthy food choices' donations from the public for our food bank clients

Tears of Thanks for the Respect



takes care of their children's dental basics, but there is no assistance for adults. The steroids used to treat Rudy's Crohn's has deteriorated his gums and teeth but thanks to the food bank dental clinic, he is now being fitted for dentures.

The Food Bank in partnership with Athletes in Action, Northview Church, and the City of Abbotsford hosted a youth summer soccer camp in August. Parents who are registered with the Food Bank pay only twenty dollars for the week and the rest of the cost is subsidized by Northview Church. Rudy and Tracey were delighted to be able to send two of their young sons, who seemed to have loads of fun learning new skills and interacting with other kids in team activities.

The disability pension barely covers the rent. "We're always behind on other bills like the utilities, and it's really hard to give the kids the things they need. But the food bank helps with their clothing and the Back to School Supplies program is great."

"Everything is so expensive now," adds Tracy. "We still spend close to two or three hundred on groceries per month. It would be nice to get more meats, household cleaning supplies, and toiletries. But we're truly grateful for the fresh fruits and vegetables whenever that's available. It's important to eat as healthy as we can."

Rudy has managed to wean himself off the majority of his medications and he is actively looking for work again in the construction industry. "I'm hopeful things will improve for us. We'll just have to see how much or what kind of work I am going to be able to do. But to get back on our feet I need to be working again."

"The best thing about this food bank is that they don't shoot down your dignity. Everyone has always treated us with so much respect and grace that it has made it easier to come back when we need it most. Thank you – thank you!"



As a construction superintendant Rudy never thought much about the Abbotsford Food Bank. Why would he? He was making good money, in his mid-thirties and in great health.

Then the young single father of four was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease, an inflammatory bowel disease with no known cure, which causes inflammation of the digestive tract, most commonly affecting the lower part of the small intestine, leading to abdominal pain, severe diarrhea and even malnutrition.

Unfortunately the steroids used to treat the Crohn's led to Osteoporosis in his lower spine. Osteoporosis is characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue leading to increased bone fragility and risk of fracture, particularly of the hip, spine and wrist. The problems associated with both conditions meant he could no longer work in the physically demanding job. Rudy went from making an average of \$35 an hour to collecting a disability pension equivalent to minimum wages.

As humbling as it was to admit, he needed help to look after his family. "The first Christmas I applied for assistance through the Christmas Bureau was awesome," says Rudy. "Everyone here at the Food Bank treated me with such respect and dignity. It was amazing."

Now married to Tracy, the couple has five children between the ages of three and seventeen. Tracy was embarrassed at first about being a food bank client but she is very grateful for everything. "I get tears in my eyes when I come and receive the things we really need. I am so thankful for the ability to come here for assistance."

Rudy and Tracy have both been able to receive dental care at the Food Bank's free dental clinic. MSP's Healthy Kids Program



Making Positive Connections

For LiQing, Abbotsford is like living in the countryside compared to where she grew up in Guangdong Province, the most populated area of southeast China. “I grew up in an area with two million people, where you can go shopping any time of day or night and restaurants are always open. Everything is so different here, so quiet at night,” she says.

She met Merv, her Canadian husband in China while he was there on business. He affectionately refers to her as ‘Green’, “because I met her in a park across from my hotel when I was attempting to teach some locals a bit of English.”

Merv brought LiQing home to Abbotsford in 2010 while pregnant with their daughter Tara, and the first place they visited was the Public Health Unit. With her first baby on the way and no family here for support, they also connected to Abbotsford Community Services on the advice of a public health nurse.

The **Best for Babies** program gave her invaluable information and support. “It also gave her the opportunity to meet more people her own age,” says Merv who is quite a few years older than LiQing.

“Best for Babies taught me all about nutrition and how to look after myself while pregnant and then when my baby came they taught me about what to expect and how to raise

her. I always looked forward to going and learning new things.”

LiQing also attended a series of cooking classes in the **Community Kitchen** which taught her how to read recipes and prepare food safely, and it also provided a unique atmosphere in which to practice her English language skills.

Through the **Multicultural Services Host Program**, LiQing participated in a number of Conversation Circles which allows participants to meet local volunteers, discuss Canadian culture, and share their own culture and experiences, while meeting new friends. The outcome naturally, is that newcomers gain confidence in speaking English and feel connected to the community.

“One of the best things I learned in Conversation Circles is where to go shopping for things for my baby, for food, and things for my new home here in Abbotsford.”

“I’ve been thrilled with everything Abbotsford Community Services has had to offer LiQing,” says Merv. “She has met so many people and she’s probably gotten more experiential education at Community Services than she would have received attending countless years at some school. It’s been great for all of us!”



December 2, 2010
Mary Polak, Minister of Children and Family Development cut the Official Opening Ribbon at New Beginnings along with Mayor George Peary, Board of Education Vice-Chair Korky Neufeld and New Beginnings student-mother Jasmine Harbridge and her daughter Nicole (being held by Minister Polak).

a
new
beginning
for **New
Beginnings**



Young parents now have a beautiful new space in which to finish their schooling, while receiving quality child-care and individual support. Formerly located at Abbotsford Collegiate, New Beginnings was moved to W.J. Mouat Secondary School in the fall of 2010. The facility officially opened its doors on December 2, 2010 in an event featuring Minister of Children and Family Development Mary Polak, Mayor George Peary and Board of Education Vice-Chair Korky Neufeld.

"We know that education is so important to the well-being of young parents and their children," said Minister Polak. "Thanks to the dedication of New Beginnings' staff and administration, and successful collaboration between community partners, New Beginnings is heading into its 21st year of building better futures for the young families of this community."

New Beginnings has the largest high school completion program in BC notes (then) Program Supervisor Louise Smith, and that's because of its welcoming, supportive environment, which meets the unique needs of a range of young parents. "The School District and Board of Education really listened to the needs of our parents and the expertise of our staff in ensuring our new space worked for everyone. We are thrilled with our new location."

The move to WJ Mouat Secondary School in the fall of 2010 has been extremely positive. Eight triple wide portables were fused together to create 1 single facility housing all four aspects of the program: the daycare, the

classroom, the support offices, and the AbbyDads program.

Diane Oliver retired this past year after teaching the New Beginning students for 21 years. "She put her heart and soul into this program," says current Program Supervisor Maria Cargnelli. "She fostered these young parents and their education when everyone else had given up on them." Students have commented:

"I would not be alive today if not for New Beginnings and the guidance of Dianne."

"I never realized how smart I really was."

"The support I've gotten at New Beginnings has helped me get farther in life which has made all my choices positive, and that has made me a better parent."

That's how important this program is to many young parents.

The **Community Education on Adolescent Sexuality (CEAS) element of New Beginnings** encourages New Beginnings students to give presentations by speaking to grade seven and eight classes. In the past year the CEAS team talked to 170 students about life choices. The central message is, 'Yes we love our children, but if we had waited, things would probably be easier. It's not easy being a youth with adult responsibilities.'

»I love this new space. We walk in and the whole building is for New Beginnings. My daughter is just down the hallway from my classroom, instead of across the parking lot, and we have lockers now," says Nattalie the 19-year-old mother of 18-month old Lexus.«

FACTS:

- 70 students enrolled in the New Beginnings Program in 2010/11 school year
- 27 of them were between the ages of 13 and 18
- Young parent programs like New Beginnings are recognized as an important step to prevent family poverty, by ensuring mothers and fathers complete their high school education and optimize their employment opportunities.
- New Beginnings operates in partnership with Abbotsford Community Services, Abbotsford School District, the Ministry of Children and Family Development and the Ministry of Education.

Recognizing the Value of Fathers



At Abbotsford Community Services, we believe that fathers play a crucial role in the development of their children. Several years ago we realized that there were many supports and activities out in the community for mothers, but very few for fathers. We now have an ever-growing choice of different types of activities for dads and their children, as well as for dads only.

The program is known as AbbyDads and this year 278 fathers with 150 children between the ages of 0-12 participated in programs and activities.

We know that positively involved fathers are valuable to their children, their family, and their community," says Father Support Worker Jeff MacLean.

"For some of the young dads we work with, it's not just about helping them get access to their children, in some cases, many of these fathers will have very minimal access to their children. But it's about helping them feel that they are doing something positive for their children whether they have custody or not. The idea is to help them become healthier human beings in realizing that they are fathers. The program is about what's best for their kids, which means different things to different family groups."

One of the biggest assets AbbyDads provides is the close tie to the Best for Babies program. "We try to educate the mothers about what fathers are all about, what they can expect from them, and the value they bring to the family," says MacLean. "It's not just about dads; it's about the more holistic family dynamic."

"So many young people, now young parents, have had poor past experiences with par-

enting and poor role models of parenting. We are trying to address all levels of that issue."

Jeff reflects on one young father in the program. "This program has taken his life and sent it in a whole other direction. Now he actually feels like a dad rather than just a teenager stuck in this adult role."

He wants the community to recognize that AbbyDads is not just about high risk young men. It is about incorporating a mixture of healthy men who feel confident in their role as a father alongside others who are experiencing different challenges. "I would love more men to come and connect with some of these dads and come alongside as role models."

Jeff tells the story of a very successful Abbotsford businessman and father who came out to some of the regular Monday Night Hockey games they organize. He connected with a particular young dad and they got together outside of the program as a play date for their children. "Our young dad was so encouraged and moved by this, I just know that small gesture totally changed his life."

About The Programs

New Beginnings

Since 1990, Abbotsford's New Beginnings has been known as a leader in working with young mothers and fathers. We provide part-time and full-time programs for young parents to complete or upgrade their high school education as well as high quality childcare, parenting courses, and individual support. For more detailed information, log on to the abbynewbeginnings.ca website.

AbbyDads is open to all Abbotsford fathers with a specific priority given to fathers of children aged 0-6. Programming is targeted to fathers under the age of 25, fathers who are separated from the mother of their children, and fathers identified by MCFD or the Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services. For more detailed information, log on to the abbydads.ca website.

How Can You Help?

Your financial donations will help us:
 Provide healthy & nutritious meals in the New Beginnings daycare
 Offer car seats, strollers, cribs and essential baby products to young parents
 Maintain or increase staffing levels at AbbyDads to meet increasing demands
 Offer entrance fees to recreation facilities and sporting events for AbbyDads

To make a donation:

Log on to the AbbotsfordCommunityServices.com website and click on the CanadaHelps Donate Button on our home page.

You can also mail or drop off your donation at 2420 Montrose Avenue, Abbotsford BC V2S 3S9





Young South Asian Couple Become **Confident Parents** Thanks to Best 4 Babies

Three year old Shabad is full of life and energy. Watching her play, Raman and Sukhvir appear to be calm, confident and caring parents. They attribute much of that confidence to the support and knowledge they gained at the Best for Babies program.

Raman started attending Best for Babies (B4B) during her pregnancy in 2007. She attended weekly group sessions and received one-on-one support from the program facilitator. She learned a lot about nutrition, the importance of Vitamin C and the need to eat iron rich foods. Many South Asian women are vegetarian and as a result their iron levels can be quite low especially during pregnancy.

She also connected to ESL classes, the Fraser Valley Child Development Centre and Breastfeeding Buddies at the Public Health Unit.

After the birth of her daughter, Raman breast fed little Shabad exclusively and never introduced the bottle. "I was able to do that because of the knowledge I gained at Best for Babies. When I had a question about something, I knew there was someone I could call and ask for help. I felt comfortable with the facilitator. She was always able to answer my questions or directed me to other services if needed. I learned how to make my own baby food; I never bought canned or jarred baby food. I saved money and was able to give my baby healthy home cooked food."

Raman also experienced some emotional sadness and attended the Post Partum Depression (PPD) program. Here she was able to share her concerns in a safe environment and comfortably in her own language.

"Just coming to a few sessions made a lot of difference.

Sukhvir attended many of the B4B one-on-one sessions with Raman. "Men in our culture have a lot to learn about the care and the raising of children. It is not only the woman's responsibility," he says.

"My wife and I got a lot of support and knowledge from the program. I will definitely recommend the Best for Babies program to other husbands and encourage them to attend as well."

Sukhvir also worked with the New Beginnings and Abby Dads program to introduce a short term program of working with South Asian fathers and their young children by taking swimming lessons. Due to a lack of funding, that service is no longer available, but Sukhvir hopes it can be revived because he knows how positive that experience was for everyone involved.

Raman started volunteering with B4B and eventually an opportunity came up to facilitate some of the cooking classes for Punjabi B4B women. She was hired by ACS to run classes at the temple. She bought the groceries and coordinated the class of 8-10 women and was very successful. She has also been trained as a Canadian Diabetes Association Food Skills for Families Facilitator.

Besides all the benefits to Raman and Sukhvir as young parents, another positive outcome has been the increased awareness among the South Asian community of the wide array of supports available to them at Abbotsford Community Services.

*All along this journey
I felt that I had
somewhere to go and
someone to talk to.
I never felt alone
or lonely.*

About the Programs

Best for Babies is a free Pregnancy Outreach Program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This Prenatal Nutrition Program, which assists pregnant women who do not typically access traditional prenatal services, offers support during pregnancy and for 6 months post-partum. Particular attention is paid to promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The Best for Babies South-Asian Group meets on Thursdays from 10 am – Noon at the Sikh Temple on South Fraser Way.

Transitions is a peer based support group for new mothers struggling with Post-partum Depression aimed at giving you a boost in confidence, skills and coping strategies in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

For more information call Monica Grover at 604.308.8216



Corporate Donor Committed to Education

The grade 3 class at Dormick Park Elementary School is learning all about the Three R's; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

In late January 2011 the class hosted a special group of visitors announcing a \$26,947 donation to the Abbotsford Community Services Recycling Program.

Manager of Market Development and Brokerage, Ken Rasmussen and Matt Dupuis of Cascades Recovery Inc. have been involved with the local recycling plant since 2009. "The recycling education component of the Abbotsford Community Services program is truly unique. We haven't seen anything else quite like it anywhere in the country," commented Rasmussen.

In 2009 the company made a commitment to donate a portion of their profits from every ton of raw paper products collected to recycling education. "Abbotsford Community Services, because of the longevity and the proactive attitude of the education program, is a perfect fit to live up to that commitment," says Dupuis.



Since then, Cascades has donated \$43,548 to the local program to further promote and expand recycling education.

Cascade Recovery Inc. is Canada's largest and one of North America's largest collector, processor and marketer of discarded materials. The company cares so much about paper and packaging that when it is discarded they simply say, "We want it back".

Near the end of the class presentation led by Laura Midan, Abbotsford Community Services Education Coordinator, teacher Maureen Ireland asked the enthusiastic group of students, "So what have we learned here today?"

»When we were talking about recycling we were really talking about loving Mother Earth,» replied one young student.«

For more information on Cascades Recovery Inc. visit www.cascades.com.

To learn more about recycling in Abbotsford visit www.acsrecycling.com.



Blue Bag Recyclables

Acceptable Materials

Cardboard: corrugated, tissue, cracker and cereal boxes etc. No wax cardboard or Styrofoam

Paper: office paper, newspaper, flyers, phone books, catalogues etc. No gift wrap

Glass Bottles and Jars: food, mayonnaise, salad dressing etc. No window panes, glass kitchen dishes or broken glass

Tetra Paks: soup, beverage etc.

Tin and Aluminum Cans: soup, coffee, pet food, foil plates etc.

Milk Containers: plastic jugs and wax paper cartons

Rigid Plastic Containers #1, #2 and #5 (lids removed). No motor oil containers

Plastic #1: PET, polyethylene terephthalate containers such as water bottles and pop bottles

Plastic #2: HDPE, high density polyethylene items including containers for laundry soap, bleach and milk

Plastic #5: PP, polypropylene items include yogurt, sour cream and cottage cheese containers.

Stretchy Film Plastic #4: LDPE, low density polyethylene which includes plastic items like grocery bags, bread bags, Ziploc bags, saran wrap, and bubble wrap etc.

Refundable Beverage Containers: beverage containers like pop bottles, pop cans, juice containers, tetra paks and water bottles should be returned for a refund but can be included in the blue bag for convenience

Did you Know...

Recyclables DO NOT have to be sorted, however they do need to be CLEAN and DRY.

All recyclable materials can be put in the same see-through blue bag and placed curbside on collection day or be dropped off at the Recycling Depot.

Blue Bags from both Abbotsford and Mission are delivered to the Abbotsford (Valley Road) site of the Abbotsford Community Services Recycling Program for sorting and processing.

In the first 6 months of 2011 the ACS Recycling Programs has educated 4,000 students on the why's, what's, and the how to's of recycling.

The Recycling Education Program is a free service provided to schools in Abbotsford and Mission.

Classroom presentations and fieldtrips including a tour of the recycling facility are available for students in pre-school through high school.

For more information about School Education Programs, contact the **Education Coordinator** 604-850-3551 Ext. 3



Largest Seniors Picnic in the Province? Possibly...

The Annual Seniors Picnic in the Park has been taking place for many years, but this year's event was bigger than ever. With just over 300 seniors in attendance, Meals on Wheels and Lunch With the Bunch Coordinator Nancy Deba says, "It's important for the community to recognize that seniors are a 'force', and it's important to celebrate seniors for who they are and all they have done for this community and for this country."

Seventy-seven year old Bette, a resident at the Irene Apartments has taken it upon herself to help as many seniors as she can. "In our little apartment block we have a 93 year old woman and an 87 year old man both of whom have no family; no one comes to visit them. We also have a 73 year old woman who is deaf and blind and she's living in her own apartment. Someone has to help these people. I just wish there was more being done for seniors."

A few years ago Bette called Abbotsford Community Services and connected to Nancy Deba who helped arrange for Meals on Wheels deliveries and special Christmas Hampers from the Food Bank. "Bette is so wonderful," says Deba. "She really cares about the seniors in her building. She is a senior herself. Seniors helping seniors – I see that so often. We have lots of volunteers in both Meals on Wheels and Lunch With the Bunch, and most of those volunteers are seniors too."

Bette arranged to have six seniors from her apartment block attend the picnic in the park because, "I thought they needed to get out and do something a little different. They don't have many activities they can be involved in, but this is really nice for them. They'll probably talk about it for weeks."

Dr. Alf Chafe couldn't agree more. As Lead Physician at Menno Hospital and Worthington Pavilion, he is concerned about the state of seniors in the community. "We really don't know how many elderly there are who are shut in, all alone and unfortunately there is no system that let's us know how they are doing. When any of us are isolated we tend to let things slide. We don't take care of ourselves the way we should and we don't 'do' our best. This is especially true of our most senior elderly who are socially isolated."

Approximately 50% of people 85 years or older have dementia and it is the most common cause of people requiring residential care. "We are seeing a huge increase in Alzheimer's patients which is partly due to the fact that as a society we are living longer."

"Programs like Lunch With the Bunch are huge," he adds. "Anything that brings seniors together is amazingly beneficial. When a senior's life is compromised in some way, by poor health for instance, their ability to socialize is diminished. And yet, we know that engagement, activity and socialization all have a very positive effect on one's health. In fact it changes the chemistry in the brain and in many cases we see individuals requiring less medication once they become more socially connected again."



Left: Dr. Alf Chafe shares a moment with Nancy Deba. **Above:** Bette enjoying the picnic with another Irene Apartment resident.

"I see opportunities for valuable service all the time!" Dr. Chafe believes that one of the biggest gaps for seniors in the community is volunteerism. "I feel strongly that we need to step forward and develop highly trained volunteers who will be committed to seniors. Meals on Wheels is wonderful, but it could be even better if there were more skilled volunteers who could not only deliver meals, but could stay with the senior longer and engage with them. Wouldn't it be great if those volunteers actually stayed and served each course of the meal they deliver? It would provide social engagement for the senior receiving the service, and an opportunity for that volunteer to skillfully observe and assess how that senior is actually doing."

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

[Financial Donations](#) to sustain and increase all areas of senior services

[Businesses to become major financial sponsors of seniors events](#) like the annual Picnic in the Park, and the annual Seniors Christmas Party

[Volunteers who are passionate about seniors](#) - there are many opportunities just waiting for you!

[For more information, please call Nancy at 604.870.3764 or Christina at 604.870.3763](#)



Thank You to Abbotsford Nissan

One of Nissan's global visions is "To improve the quality of life in the communities in which Nissan operates". In 1993, Nissan Canada Inc. established The Nissan Canada Foundation as a way for the company to give back to the community.

Since then, the Foundation's main mission has been to help improve the quality of life for seniors through programs like Meals on Wheels, and by assisting seniors maintain their independence by providing transportation for things such as medical appointments or shopping trips for daily necessities.

Why seniors? Because they've fought wars, and won political battles for things we now take for granted; for health care, for unemployment insurance, for universal pensions. In fact, they've struggled for virtually everything that defines us as Canadians.

Today, the Foundation supports over 35 organizations across Canada and supplies over 50 vehicles to those organizations to help them meet seniors' needs.

[Thank You to Abbotsford Nissan for being a "dealer partner" by supplying and servicing our wonderful Meals on Wheels 2011 Nissan Foundation vehicle.](#)

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011

RECEIPTS	2010-2011	2009-2010
Provincial Government	\$ 8,478,660	\$ 8,093,532
Recycling	2,571,452	2,427,154
Federal Government	555,992	500,223
Donation	602,356	950,666
Gift in Kind	1,243,038	1,199,255
Volunteer Hours	493,330	557,057
Bingo, Direct Access & BC 150 Grants	212,471	213,139
Fees & Other	2,133,833	1,920,543
Deferred revenue - for Capital Purchases	1,456	1,574
Deferred revenue - for Operating Expenses	55,000	158,727
Gain/Loss on disposal of capital assets	11,000	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 16,658,588	
DISBURSEMENTS		
Wages & Related Costs	\$ 11,485,827	\$ 11,115,683
Facilities & Equipment	793,735	735,936
Office Operations	362,134	373,293
Other Program Costs	1,146,760	1,026,591
Distribution of Gift in Kind	1,736,368	1,756,312
Transfer to Vancouver Foundation	15,400	10,662
Amortization of Capital Assets	432,093	474,753
Transfer of Recycling Capital Assets and Net Assets	1,816,927	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 17,789,244	\$ 15,493,230
NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM OPERATIONS	(\$1,130,656)	\$528,640

Note: During the year, the Society entered into a new recycling contract with the City of Abbotsford and the District of Mission, thus eliminating the Society's previously recorded restricted net assets. The Recycling Facility assets previously held by ACS were transferred to the Municipalities on December 31, 2010

ENDOWMENT FUNDS WITH:

Vancouver Foundation	\$ 659,264	\$ 658,864
Abbotsford Foundation	101,034	86,034
TOTAL:	\$ 760,298	\$ 744,898

Note: Audited Statements are available upon request



more alike than different



In British Columbia you are free to worship in whatever way you want. Part I of the Constitution Act (1982) guarantees that all Canadians can have freedom of thought, belief, conscience and religion.

Source:
www.welcomebc.ca

On March 30th and 31st a unique event took place at the Matsqui Recreation Centre called the 'Bridges of Faith Conference – Debunking Myths, Bringing Out Uniqueness and Beauty'.

Over the last five years staff members in the **Diversity and Education and Resource Services (DEARS) program** have been tracking the pulse of our community through the media and Letters to the Editor in both local papers. This research clearly pointed to a lack of understanding and respect for members of various populations represented in Abbotsford.

The *Bridges of Faith Conference* was created to bring together members of different faith communities to encourage open and honest conversation in a safe and respectful environment. The conference included panel presentations, table group dialogue, dinner and other activities designed to break down stereotypes of different faith groups.

One female participant in her early sixties with no specific religious affiliation was surprised by the great variety of faiths represented. In fact, the 15-member planning committee belong to a very diverse group of faiths including people of Aboriginal Spirituality, the Baha'i, Christian, Sikh, Islamic, Hindu, Wicca and Buddhist faiths.

She was also surprised that people practicing different faiths were married to each other. "Each faith has merit," she says. "How does one choose? Religious beliefs intrigue me and I often think I would like to attend various churches – but of course don't get around to it. This conference has been a great introduction to so many of them. The thing that stuck with me is how much alike they all are."

Another Sikh participant came away with the realization that "the common thread was that no matter what faith we practice, all faiths promote treating each other with respect and acceptance despite our differences. I am proud that our religion, Sikhism, teaches acceptance and respect of all and to live a life of kindness and love."

About the Program

DEARS provides opportunities for diverse members of the community to learn more about one another while supporting those who face discrimination. Working towards a 'just society that embraces the value, dignity and diversity of all human beings', staff work with volunteers to organize a number of projects including community-wide events, school workshops and other educational programs.

How You Can Help

Financial donations will allow us to offer more workshops as demand for anti-racism education increases.

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Abbotsford Community Services
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.
- Therefore, we will act to promote inclusion of all in our agency and in our community.

Abbotsford Community Services

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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



United Way
of the Fraser Valley



LEAVE A LEGACY
BRITISH COLUMBIA