

Connecting children, youth  
and families to thrive since 1974.



ANNUAL REPORT  
**2011/2012**



**Richmond**  
**Youth Service**  
**Agency**

**Richmond Youth Service Agency**

# From the President

As an agency, we are proud to have supported over 2000 kids, youth, adults and families in the past year through the diverse programs RYSA offers. Through the hard work and dedication of our staff and the wonderful support of volunteers, community partners, donors and funders, we have been able to positively impact many youth and families in our community.

I'm excited that we've seen consistent growth in our most recent years, which has allowed us to increase services, support and broaden the impact on our community. However, changes to government funding and priorities continue to create challenges for us, although we have been able to manage these responsibly. We continue to leverage opportunities and work hard to minimize the impact of these changes on the work we do. The youth down the street, child next door and a wide array of your neighbours rely on services that we offer. With that in mind I can't stress enough the importance of the role you can play in raising the awareness of the challenges faced by the kids, youth and families within our community and to be involved towards making a difference. There are many ways in which you can support us other than through donations, and I'd like to encourage you to contact our office to explore how you might be able to get involved. Remember that the youth of today needs you, and they are the ones creating the communities and economies of tomorrow.

RYSA believes in working from a supportive and preventative framework where we empower kids, youth and families to succeed. Each year, we look at what changes we have been able to make in our community, and at areas where we could make a difference. Areas such as affordable out-of-school care programs, youth housing, accessible employment programs, increased support for New Canadian youth, and helping people connect to the support systems they need continue to be priority areas for us to work on. Change can come from the simplest, and sometimes the most unexpected, places. We hope that you can be part of these moments and see how this makes a difference. You can give your time, make a donation or help us to raise awareness and develop new relationships that support each child, youth and family to thrive. We know that you will get far more than you give along the way.

I'd like to wrap up by thanking each and every one of you who have helped us get to where we are today. Without your support, and the giving of yourselves to the community

we would not have been able to have the positive, often life-changing, impact we have had on the lives of those we work with. Thank you!

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leon van der Poel'.

Leon van der Poel  
President of the  
Board of Directors

## Our Board

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## Our Goal

We will work towards a better tomorrow by connecting our community and supporting our children, youth and families to thrive and reach for their dreams.

# Summary of Activities

## Richmond Youth Centre

The Richmond Youth Center is part of the Connections Youth Resource Center and provides a variety of activities and support for kids, youth and the community. Some of the key programs, activities and events during the past year and highlighted below.

## Volunteering and Leadership



Richmond Youth Service Agency provides leadership training to volunteers to ensure they are equipped with the essential skills to volunteer and to promote individual skill development. Skills include: conflict resolution and teamwork, leadership, community awareness, planning and goal setting and specific training for tutors and specialized volunteers. Approximately 95% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they had built their leadership skills over the school year in Generations Homework Club. A similar percentage of the U-Connect volunteers agreed that their skills have also improved and they feel more confident and have a clearer idea of career choices. A volunteer from U-Connect said one of the rewards of volunteering with the U-Connect Crew was how it influenced her to make positive choices in her life in general. Many youth have commented on how much they value RYSA for leadership experience and the fun they have while giving back to their community.

## U-Connect Crew

U-Connect Crew is a group of youth who meet every week and work to positively engage and support their community, learn new skills, expand their social networks and make a difference in the world around them. There are two sub-groups: the U-Do crew work on creating and running events in the community and the U-Write crew works on writing articles for youth by youth on the online magazine they created a few years ago, Clix magazine ([www.clixmag.ca](http://www.clixmag.ca)). The program is supported through a variety of partnerships with the City of Richmond, Coast Capital Savings, the Province of British Columbia and a number of other local donors and supporters. The program provides a variety of activities and outcomes that include raising funds to support programs and activities for youth in their community, organizing workshops and forums for youth to learn about their community and connect to resources, providing volunteer support to programs such as out of school camps, homework clubs and community events. This program is a key component of the youth center and focuses on how youth can be engaged towards making a difference in themselves and the world around them!

**100% of surveyed U-Connect youth agreed or strongly agreed that they have developed new skills and have an expanded interest in volunteering after completing 2011/2012 U-Connect**

## Clix Magazine

Clix Magazine has continued to be an enjoyable project for the U-Write crew and they wrote and produced three issues for the year. Clix Magazine helps youth learn how to engage in their community using the web. Topics within the issues this year included sports, fashion, reviews, and tips and tricks. Writing for Clix magazine has taught the youth how to work successfully in a team-setting, collaborate, share ideas, respect and value other's opinions. The magazine also encourages other youth to find out about what is going on in Richmond, connect with services and get involved!

*"Richmond Youth Service Agency provides a valuable learning experience for improving communication skills and developing leadership skills. They are like another family to me."*

Bruce, U-Connect member since September 2012

## Winter Celebration



On December 16th, the U-Connect crew and Oskayak Youth Council worked with staff at Fraserview Church to hold a dinner at Fireside Hall. The dinner brought people together to share the holidays over food and entertainment. The event was

a huge success with a quality meal including turkey catered by a local and sustainable company. Nearly all of our produce was donated by local growers via Arzeena Hamir at the Richmond Food Security Society and we had many families enjoy the dinner and activities planned. The U-Connect volunteers and Pathways youth planned the event, made hand-made gifts for the families, cooked, served, played games and did crafts with the children and cleaned up. The Aboriginal youth also performed some traditional songs in a drumming performance. Over 100 people enjoyed the meal and sharing. Overall, the event was a great time had by all and the youth and staff really worked hard to pull it all off.

## The Year End Volunteer Appreciation



RYSA cannot thank our volunteers enough for their commitment and dedication and many of our programs rely on volunteers to run. To show how much their hard work is appreciated, we always host volunteer appreciation days where volunteers receive achievement certificates, gift cards/honorariums and are treated to a lunch with fun activities. This year we hosted 3 volunteer appreciation days with fun had by all!

*“During my time at U-Connect, I have made countless connections and invaluable friendships. U-Connect has transformed throughout my time volunteering from a place to get volunteer hours to a place of camaraderie and companionship. Being around such nice, well-rounded individuals helped me grow as a person.”*

Anonymous U-Connect member

## Spring Break Camp

The Spring Break camp ran for two weeks during the Richmond School District March Break. The Camp is made possible through the help of the School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, the United Way, the Province of British Columbia and local donors and supporters. The Camp focused on providing kids with an engaging, encouraging and fun experience promoting learning, health and wellness and social development. Camp activities included but were not limited to: at least one hour of physical activity per day, making healthy snacks like smoothies, an out trip to a local park, using creativity as well as ingenuity to build and make take-home projects such as backpacks. The Camp benefited from the support of trained Tutor/ Mentors through the U-Connect and Homework Clubs. Without these volunteers, we would not have been able to make the camp the success it was! We were also able to provide opportunities for kids who had other challenges with behavioural issues that would not have been able to participate in other camps in the community.

Over twenty children participated in the Spring Break Camp. Kids

commented that they enjoyed spending time with the youth volunteers. There was one young girl who is selectively mute but began to whisper to one of the staff members, a huge change! Many kids talked about being upset to leave their television or internet at the beginning of camp. These comments quickly evaporated as they had fun, learned new things and made friends. It was important that the camp was fun and a great time for the kids but also that it was accessible and affordable for families. The camp is subsidized and there were bursaries available.

During the camp kids gave feedback on their experience using the “shout out” method of feedback. They were asked about what they enjoyed and what they wanted to see more of. Parents were also verbally surveyed on their last day by staff members. Key indicators included whether the parents thought their children enjoyed camp, whether it was affordable and also if they would join again in the future. Both parents and children really enjoyed and valued the camp and asked if the camp could be extended from 3 days to full time. It was a huge success again this year.

## Stay in School Program



With the generous support of Children’s Aid Foundation and Scotia

Capital, Richmond Youth Service Agency (RYSA) has been offering the Stay in School and Graduation Awards program since 2006. This program is designed to recognize and celebrate the efforts of at risk, disadvantaged local children and youth who persevere and stay in school while dealing with and overcoming adversity. The awards are offered to celebrate their achievements and efforts in school and sports, to recognize their positive participation in the community and promote further education. The funding also supports the tutoring services offered through RYSA that encourages elementary aged kids towards personal and school success.



To date, RYSA has offered these awards to more than 170 deserving students and provided thousands of hours of tutoring. This year 24 students were presented awards at our annual Stay in School Awards Ceremony held at the Richmond Cultural Center. More than 100 people attended the ceremony including the Mayor, City Councillors, School Trustees, local dignitaries, artists and many local agency representatives, students and parents. A number of youth groups, artists and individuals provided entertainment from music, to dancing and the event showcased the diverse culture of our community and the talent within the youth of Richmond. The awards

were presented with RYSA staff and other guests celebrating their accomplishments. We truly appreciate the ability to recognize the hard work of local kids in working towards their dreams.

## Rogers Connections Program



Rogers Connections Program (RCP) is a corporately funded program in partnership with Rogers Youth Fund that helps at-risk high school students overcome barriers to education, and empowers them to succeed in the classroom and beyond. The goal is to help students between the ages of 12 and 19, especially those who are at-risk due to poverty, isolation, having to adjust to a new language and culture, or who are facing challenges at home. We focus on academic support in reading, math, and science through after-school homework clubs and personalized tutoring. We also provide a safe environment where students who are disenchanted with school can come and get support in life skills and mentoring towards building goals to meet their personal needs and access resources to overcome family and life challenges. The program is driven through the involvement of staff and trained volunteer tutor/mentors that provide one-to-one, group and outreach support for youth in our community.

*“Math is easier than I thought”*

## GHC Hugh Boyd young student about his homework

We surveyed and connected with the areas of Richmond which have the highest need for our services. We secured two locations in partnership with local schools at the moment and have a fantastic relationship with the counsellors at both schools. We have had parents call in to ask when their child’s schools will have the same program. One family is currently willing to drive their child to another location in order to benefit from our program. With the launch of our program on February 1, 2012, we have had a good response only within one month of running the program with up to 10 students attending at one of the locations. We are looking forward to reaching more students as students become aware of how this program will help them achieve their goals. We are proud of the connections our university/college volunteers have made with the youth in such a short amount of time, their commitment to the program and their overall amazing attitude to help our community and the youth in need. Volunteer recruitment has been successful with the recruitment of 16 volunteers.



We are currently at 2 locations. Hugh Boyd High School where we utilize both a resource room and the neighbouring community center, West Richmond Community Center, and Steveston Community Center which is close to McMath High School. The reason for utilizing the community centers is that we have the opportunity to use the games room and gym when students come and just want a safe environment. By forging the connections with the youth who might have challenges with academics, we hope to gain trust and build on a relationship that will in the future allow for helping with their educational goals. Our third location has just been secured and will begin on May 8th at South Arm Community Center which will service both McRoberts High School and McNair High School. We will also be organizing a summer activities program and providing support to students who have to take summer school courses. This will help us engage youth for the next school year and develop supportive relationships with them.

Since the inception of the program on February 1st, 2012 we have seen an increase in attendance. We have a consistent base of 9 volunteers and 7 on call volunteers, who are very committed and enjoy their participation with the program. They have gone through our training and have been very proactive in finding resources to help the students. All volunteers of the program are currently enrolled in related school programs, for example, social work diploma, counseling degrees, and more. We are glad to say that all volunteers have said that they are more aware of community issues and have had a positive experience with

the program, seeing that the program is not only necessary due to funding cuts, but essential in building lifelong learning for our youth. We believe that this model has a huge impact on not only the youth supported, but also those involved as tutor/mentors by providing real work experience, training and increased awareness of community issues.

*"I noticed that one of the girls at Cambie has begun to participate more in our icebreakers/activities. I have sat with her and encouraged her and am surprised how she has come out of her shell. She reminds me of myself when I was younger. I was very shy and didn't like to ask for help. It's neat to see this child feel comfortable socializing with others."*

Anonymous GHC tutor/mentor

## Generations Homework Club

Over 50 volunteers were recruited and trained from September 2011 to March 2012, a larger number than past years. Two sites were confirmed for the school year. A schedule was developed for the program for two days per week per site. Activities that supported learning, fun and helped kids keep active were developed. These included crafts, games, outdoor activities and individual and group learning activities.

We recruited kids from local schools and neighbourhoods. We found out where they needed some help and then they were matched up with tutors. At the end of the year or when the kids left the program, students and parents were asked for feedback. The program worked towards impacting the kids outlook towards school,

their confidence in core subjects, social skills and their language skills. Youth volunteers were also asked for feedback both about the kids and their own experience. The goal of this program is to make a difference for the kids and to impact the volunteers with increased confidence, self esteem and helping them develop their skills.



During the course of the program over 90% of kids reported a positive change in their outlook towards school, increased confidence with core subjects and with parents providing similar observations! The volunteers reported that they increased their skills, confidence, social networks and several reported that this helped them make career choices! We had 1,488 contacts with kids during the year and over 2000 hours of volunteer support and tutoring assistance was provided. This was made possible with the support from the Children's Aid Foundation, the United Way, the Province of BC, and fundraised dollars.

## Summer Camp Adventures

This year's summer camp was a great success. It was made possible through the United Way, the Province of BC, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Richmond School District, the Government

of Canada, and fundraised dollars. We continued to work with the Richmond School Program and local community agencies to provide integrated opportunities for kids with behavioural or other challenges to participate in the camp. The Camp was offered in weekly sessions for 8 weeks. The staffing to support these kids was through Vancouver Coastal Health, MCFD and RYSA. In addition to providing increased spaces for these children, the program offered over 40 kids subsidies to participate in camp that they would not have otherwise been able to access due to socio-economic and other barriers. During the camp, 90% of children indicated increases in indicators that reflected social skill development, awareness of health and wellness/ physical activities in their life. 100% of children reported that they tried a new activity during the summer. Over 90% of children reported that the camp was fun and 80% participated in more than one week during the summer. Children also commented on enjoying the out trips and wanting to go on more trips as well as preparing and eating more healthy foods.



Parent, child and support staff feedback was positive and indicated that there is a desire to see the camp run for a full 5 days during the summer months. This was the only

form of improvement feedback for the camp. Parents also reported that their children encouraged them to try out low cost activities in Richmond.



70% of parents indicated that they were introduced to new options for activities with their kids. There was a particular success story of a child with high needs, achieving well beyond what was expected of him during the summer which helped him to transition more successfully into the classroom setting in September. This program had 344 contacts and volunteers gave over 1100 hours total of their time!

### Station Stretch Program

The Youth and Family Worker (YFW) at Stretch has been a long standing partnership between the Richmond school District and RYSA. The YFW provides one to one support, group and supportive services at an alternate school that enrolls students who are experiencing troubles at the larger high schools. These students may be referred to the school for reasons of truancy, poor academic

performance, or conduct issues. Often these issues are symptoms of a deeper underlying problem such as family stress, addictions, grief and loss, mental health, and financial troubles. Once the students are enrolled at the school they work towards Grade 10 completion and are evaluated according to specific criteria: attendance and punctuality, academic performance, and attitude and conduct. Once they are successful or have made improvements in these areas, the students are transferred back to either their neighbourhood school or another district program to complete their Grade 12. Each student receives attention from the YFW in the form of integration into the program, planning, intensive one-to-one support, or ongoing support.

During the 2011-2012 school year the school enrolled 50 students between the levels of Grade 8 to 10. 64% of the students were male and 36% female. 62% of the students graduated from the program and successfully completed their Grade 10 while the remaining 38% continue to work towards this goal. 52% received moderate to intensive support from the YFW during period, which translates into a minimum of 125 sessions. The remainder received consultation, transition, and general support. In addition to the students attending the school, the YFW continued to provide intensive support to 10 Stretch graduates who moved on to other schools. This is key to long term success of the youth we support. In addition, the majority of students received information, referral and support in accessing community based services and supports.

Addiction is still a prominent issue for the students along with excessive

gaming. This past year, the YFW also dealt with several cases of sexual assault and abusive partners. These youth were referred to TASA as well as other community members such as the RCMP. In a positive note, the YFW enjoyed watching some students flourish as they left behind their behavioural problems to develop new attitudes and patterns that yield success. One student has completely eliminated drug and alcohol use, secured employment, and has grown closer to family. Furthermore, she has improved her attendance and performance in school, and has made such changes that we submitted her name for a Stay In School Award.



Yet another student has developed a desire to “live” her life and is looking at a residential treatment centre. Both of these girls had experienced very tragic events in their lives from bullying to abuse. Their success and willingness to change should be considered a triumph in their long journeys. Finally, a former student is now poised to graduate from McNair Secondary. She too had experienced tragic events in her life and had succumbed to heavy drug use; however she was able to totally eliminate drug use and is now headed for college.

## Richmond School Program

The Richmond School Program (RSP) is an alternative program located at Blundell Elementary School and is unique partnership between Vancouver Coastal Health, the Richmond School District, RYSA and the Ministry of Children and Families. The Program consists of two classrooms, primary grades K-3 and the intermediate grade 4-7 that work with students with social, emotional and behavioural challenges that are barriers to them being successful in a mainstream classroom. Each class has a maximum of six students who receive support from classroom staff, individual and family counselling from Vancouver Coastal Health, one-to-one and group work with a RYSA Child and Family worker. During their time at the RSP, the students work on goals and strategies to help them be more successful at home, school and in the community. Students also receive support from a Speech and Language pathologist, Occupational Therapist and one of two Psychiatrists on staff.

Some of the issues facing our current caseload are anxiety, ADHD (attention deficit disorder), anger management, mental health issues, family stressors, OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), lack of peer and social skills and ODD (oppositional defiant disorder). As RYSA child youth and family workers, we work within the classroom, do one-to-one work (to work on strategies to help them get through tough times), help in integrating the students back to their home schools and also do some after school work with the students in the community. We attend many meetings with parent, schools and community agencies to help the

students be as successful in as many areas as possible.

Currently, we have a caseload of 10 students in the program (12 is full capacity), and are providing follow up contact with 3 students who graduated at the end of the last school year. Some of our special program activities have unfortunately been limited this year due to the Teacher’s work action. The child and family workers also help with additional activities during spring break and summer months. This past year with the support of one of the staff and some additional funding through RYSA, we were able to provide opportunities for kids who otherwise wouldn’t be able to participate in such camps with the support they need to have fun!



The past year had some great success with 3 students fully transitioning back to their home schools. The teachers of the graduates have noticed a remarkable change compared to when they had originally left for the Richmond School Program. The staff and RYSA continue to work to identify areas where we can increase opportunities for the kids, support positive outcomes and overcome some of the challenges for the kids and their families. This has included family nights, out of school activities, spring break and summer camps

and working to connect families to needed resources in the community.

## Pathways Aboriginal Centre

Pathways Aboriginal Centre has been open for 6 years. It is home to a number of unique projects and programs for Aboriginal children, youth and families. Funding for programs resources and activities through the centre are generously supported through a variety of funders including: Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY), Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Strategies (MVAUS), The Government of Canada, Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond School District, Vancity, the United Way and several other grants and donors. Pathways continues to build on previous success by listening to our community members voices. We work to ensure they have access to appropriate and culturally-based support, resources and activities that promote health and wellness, skill development, leadership, cultural awareness and school participation within the Aboriginal community of Richmond.



With the support of many staff, community, and local agencies over the last year, Pathways has been able to support 89 Aboriginal youth, 57 Aboriginal children and 54 Aboriginal

families. Through events, activities and celebrations such as the Winter Celebration, National Aboriginal Day, Stay in School Awards Ceremony and Doors Open Celebration, we have connected with over 500 more people and have worked with over 35 agencies and partners during the last year. This last year brings many memories including the establishment of the OSKAYAK Drum Group, a monthly Aboriginal Community Kitchen, a series of interactive workshops where youth created a film titled "Nature" at the Richmond Media Lab, maintaining the OSKAYAK Garden, monthly family nights and trips to the sweat lodge in Xwemelch'stn (Capilano Reservation).

*"I enjoy the club, it is fun and they have stuff to read...I like going there." Astrum am num*

## Ravens Homework Club



RYSA and the Pathways Aboriginal Centre hosted the Ravens Homework Club (RHC) for the 2011-12 school year. This unique program is made possible with the support of the United Way, Vancity, Richmond School District, local donors, partners and funders. RHC is free and homework support is provided from volunteer mentors, tutors and Pathways staff. Weekly RHC activities include tutoring, and fun activities such as a fitness challenges, art projects, getting kids involved in other activities

at RYSA like camps. Light snacks and drinks were provided during each session. We worked with the Richmond School District to identify kids who needed help and worked hard to make it a fun experience that encouraged learning and success.

## Aboriginal Community Kitchen



A community kitchen was established this past year and we called it "The Cook and Share Project" (CASP). CASP was in collaboration with Richmond Youth Service Agency, Pathway's Aboriginal Centre, The Garrat Wellness Centre, Aboriginal Health Strategic Initiative and Vancouver Coastal Health. The program worked to enhance health and wellness outcomes, educate about diabetes prevention and promoted families towards health eating and accessing local food resources. The project ran from October 2011 to April 2012 and offered opportunities for local Aboriginal families and/or caregivers of Aboriginal children and youth to participate in bi-monthly Cook and Share evenings that worked towards improving and promoting health, cultural pride and knowledge of local health and wellness resources. The

project was a great success with 71 participants overall who met twice a month to hear guest speakers, share recipes and cook healthy meals. The recipes have been compiled into a recipe book titled "Richmond Aboriginal Community Kitchen Recipe Book". The book has been printed and we will be looking at selling it as a way to continue to support programs and resources at the Centre.

## Oskayak Youth Program

The OSKAYAK Youth Program (OYP) works with urban Aboriginal youth between the ages of 10-24. During the year, we provided support to 46 youth and their families. The program seeks to develop unique opportunities for the younger kids and older youth. We encourage older participants to mentor the younger kids and even lead activities. The program works to engage, inspire and connect Aboriginal youth within Richmond and surrounding areas towards developing individual and community leadership skills. The program strives to enhance the prospects for each youth from a social, cultural, economic, and health perspective.



Through youth-driven activities, the program promotes learning, assists in developing life skills, increase youth

involvement in our community and strives to strengthen the relationships between youth in our community.

Youth are encouraged to be involved in the planning of activities, promoting their learning and culture to the community and passing down the knowledge to the younger youth at in the program. This past year, the youth worked alongside the OSKAYAK Youth Committee (OYC) for the sixth year in a row to plan and fundraise for events and activities important to them and their peers. The activities identified by the OYC and the other program participants can be placed into 5 categories, cultural development, life skills and wellness, youth engagement, leadership and community development. Below are just a few of the successful activities and events that took place throughout the last year: monthly trips to the sweat lodge, moccasin making workshops, Traditional gardening workshops, attending the Pulling Together Canoe Journey, Cooking classes with elder Chef Maluh, Art Therapy sessions, recreational activities such as paint ball and laser tag, a weekend leadership retreat at loon Lake, weekly youth committee meetings, and attending the Gathering our Voices Conference in Nanaimo, BC.

## Richmond Aboriginal Leadership and Life-Skills for Youth (RALLY)

The 2011-2012 RALLY Project supported 23 Urban Aboriginal youth to learn the skills that will support them to manage the challenges of everyday life. The project included workshops on budgeting, cooking, planning, conflict resolution, communication, time management,

personal health and wellness and more advanced skills such as leadership training, goal setting, cultural and artistic expression. Key outcomes for the RALLY 2011-2012 Project was to offer the participants career exploration workshops and situations where they could practice the skills that they learned through participation in the project. This year, participants had a choice of either finding a career exploration placement or participating in a community improvement project identified by the project and the youth involved.



Twelve youth were in the community improvement stream where they planned 3 community events such as a Stay in School Award Ceremony, a Winter Celebration and a Aboriginal Games Workshop for elementary aged children. All of the events were well attended with an average of 35 community visitors at each event. 11 youth were in the career stream where 5 youth found employment, 8 youth achieved First Aid Certification, 6 youth achieved Food Safe Level 1 training. The project continues to have a large impact on the youth and on our community. Whether it is helping a youth get enrolled in training or post secondary education, or helping them learn more about their culture, Pathways door is always open to them for a place simply to gather or to seek resources and support

from staff.

### National Aboriginal Day

National Aboriginal Day Celebration on June 21st 2011 was organized with the support of 8 members from the OSKAYAK Youth Committee (OYC). There was an excellent turn out with over 250 visitors who enjoyed traditional drumming and dancing groups. The day was opened by a local Elder, the Mayor and other local city council members and members of parliament. The day showcased the talents of local youth and supported the Aboriginal community to take pride in their culture history.

### Pathways Aboriginal Outreach Education Program (PAOEP)

Pathways Aboriginal Outreach Education Program (PAOEP) is a partnership program with RYSA, the Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health. The program works with the School District, counsellors, community agencies, the Ministry of Children, Youth and Families, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS), Aboriginal Court workers, Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), the Vancouver Friendship Centre and other service providers and RYSA to ensure that

Aboriginal children, youth and families are supported to receive or access resources and assistance they require to promote health and wellness, success at school and at home with respect and consideration of their diverse traditions, and culture.



From March 30th, 2011 to April 2012, PAOEP serviced 20 different families, 29 unique children and youth and visited 12 different elementary and secondary schools. A total of 401 individual counselling sessions and 60 educational drop-in sessions were held. Eight OSKAYAK Times (newsletters) created and distributed to over 350 community contacts. PAOEP organized 15 community and family events with over 397 people attending. These included gardening workshops, art therapy workshops, traditional sweat lodge teachings, button blanket making workshops,

an affordable housing focus group, a community winter celebration and monthly family dinners.

In 2011-2012, PAOEP strengthened relationships with, The Sharing Farm, Aboriginal Court Workers, VACFSS, Native Education Centre in Vancouver, Richmond Addiction Services, the Metro Vancouver Homeless Committee, the City of Richmond, and the Richmond School District. The program established some new partnerships with Richmond Media Lab, Richmond Food Securities, Richmond Housing Committee, the LOVE Project, and Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

### Connections Youth Employment Resource Centre (2008-2012)

RYSA operated the Connections Employment Centre from April 2008-April 2012 and provided direct and indirect employment assistance services to approximately 17,000 job seekers between the ages of 15-30. The centre far exceeded all contract targets and came in under budget while successfully completing all audits and financial monitors for the agreement. Some additional relevant data collected by this project includes that over 70% of clients were

### Connections Employment Centre Agreement to Date Stats: March 2008 to April 2012

	ESC Visits	Needs Determinations	Case Managed Closed	Case Managed: Employed and Returned to School	Case Managed % EMP or In School	Non Case Managed Clients Employed
Target	11,800	1,370	982	718	73%	N/A
Achieved	16,465	1,589	965	736	76%	1,450
% of Target	140%	116%	98%	101%	+3%	

We unfortunately are no longer funded to provide these youth focused employment services. However, RYSA is committed to continuing to work in our community to ensure that youth receive the support they need towards school, life and employment success.

immigrants or spoke English as a second language.

The centre provided all employment related services to youth including drop in self directed or assisted job search supports and resources, thorough needs assessments and case management and even group based employability skills workshops. In addition, the centre supported all other non-targeted job seekers through our resource advisors and self-directed resource centre. Finally, the centre held 7 hiring and community fairs with attendance to a career specific fair of over 3500 people. In addition to these outcomes, over 700 people found work through in-depth services and an additional 750 people reported finding employment through drop-in and non-case managed assistance. This brings the total employed or returned to school as a result of interventions supported by the centre to over 1450. (See table on previous page)

## Job Options BC



RYSA has been offering the Job Options BC – Richmond/South Delta program for unemployed Richmond and South Delta residents since November 2010. Job Options BC is an employment and skills training program that helps unemployed individuals over the age of 18 obtain the skills, confidence and experience they need to find and sustain

*“Getting a job within just few weeks is amazing; actually I didn’t believe I could make it until my job started. I really appreciate that I had the opportunity provided by Job Options BC Richmond/South Delta program. It was a great experience and everyone was very helpful, not only with my career, but other aspects in my life, such as understanding myself better and building confidence. I believe that all I learned from this program will be benefit me in the future.”*

*”I think the Job Options program is great! Kudos to all of the professionals who coordinate, facilitate and administrate the program. The workshops are thorough, customized and filled with job market advice far better than anything out there!”*

*“I’d like to express how grateful I am for being able to participate in the Job Options program. Thank you to everyone for making the transition from unemployment to being employed a pleasant one. One of the features of the program that I felt was most beneficial, was helping us connect with employers. This directly resulted in me landing a job that I am still working in today!”*

*“I hope that you know how much I appreciated this great opportunity. You guys were all very welcoming and allowed me to step far beyond my comfort zone. I have gained some very helpful skills and knowledge throughout this experience.”*

employment. This program is based on three phases; group based training phase, work experience phase and follow up phase. During the first 5 weeks of the program, participants receive employability skills training that also include short-term training/certifications and customized coaching. During the 2nd phase, participants receive one-to-one job placement, wage subsidy and on-going follow up support based on their individual needs/action plans. Clients then receive follow up support, coaching and job development assistance for the next six months. This program has proven extremely successful in assisting those who have not made the connection to the labour market and have multiple barriers to employment.

Some examples of the short-

term training received by program participants include Occupational First Aid, Fork Lift, Simply Accounting, MS Office, Food Safe, World Host, Cashier and more. In addition, the program offers a career corner component where employers from various sectors conduct group presentations around their hiring needs, job requirements, work place expectations and interview procedures. Some of our employer partners include Vancity, CIBC, Office Depot, Scotia Bank, Nurse Next Door, and WorkSafeBC,

To date, we have provided employability skills training through group based programming to 153 participants in 13 cycles (8 in Richmond and 5 in Ladner/South Delta). Client backgrounds disclosed included 57% immigrants, 5%

Aboriginal and 39% indicating other backgrounds. Of the 13 cycles we have completed the follow up phase with 7 cycles. The success rate of those employed after 6 months is 80%.



### English and Life Skills For Daily Living (2010-present)

In response to significant interest by our ESL clients and community members in general, we planned, developed and launched a beginner level theme based program called 'English and Life Skills for Daily Living' in September 2010. This is a free program created to fill a huge gap in the local community for immigrants and seniors living in Canada for more than five years who don't have access to the free ELSA classes and can't afford paid ESL training programs. Two volunteer tutors co-facilitate

the program workshops. This hands on and interactive program covers various daily living topics including 'Making a Small Talk', 'Shopping for Groceries', 'Understanding Canadian Holidays', 'Looking for Work in Canada', 'Understanding Canadian Workplace', 'Networking', 'Job Search Skills' and a lot more. Curriculum is designed to enhance participants listening, and speaking (conversational) skills.



Since the launch, this program has been attracting an overwhelming response from people interested in enhancing their basic conversational skills. For example, we have 15 seats in the program. On the 1st day, 25 people showed up while another 50 were still on the waiting list. This trend has continued since the launch

of the program. A large majority of the participants (current and on the wait list) is made up of stay-at-home immigrant mothers and immigrant adults/seniors between the ages of 45 to 80 who have been in Canada for more than 10 years.

It has been an extremely rewarding experience for us to offer this service to our local community. We have had participants who were unable to say a single sentence in English on the 1st day of the program stand up and make a speech at the end of the eight week period thanking program staff and volunteers for the difference this program has made for them. One of the participants (an 80 year old Chinese gentleman) told us that he had never spoken to anyone outside of his own culture before but after attending the program, he introduced himself to someone at a bus stop in English and was able to have a simple conversation with them! To date, 180 people have completed the 8 week cycle of the program and 77 are currently on the wait list for the upcoming intakes.

Connecting  
children, youth  
and families  
to thrive since  
1974.



# Our Stories

## Employment Success

WT – a mature individual is a divorced mother of two children who was left without any child or spousal support had no work experience for the past 30 years. When she started the program, she was extremely concerned about her ability to find work and be able to provide for her family. She was worried about her being an older job seeker and having to compete with younger, more educated and more experienced candidates. She was completely unclear of her job/career choices and was afraid that she may not be able to find work as a result of all her challenges. We worked with her to identify her transferrable skills and employment options. She decided on exploring the retail sales/warehousing field. The program paid for her First Aid and Cashier Certifications and helped her connect with employers and market herself. When one of our employers (Sterling Shoes) contacted us with a warehouse posting, she jumped at the opportunity and was hired as a result of her enthusiasm, positive attitude, go getter approach and her certifications. She is extremely happy and is grateful for all the support she received from the program and staff. We are very proud of her new found confidence and accomplishments. Most of all she feels she is now able to support her family!



## Outreach and Family Support

For the last 2 years, we have been supporting a family with having their child properly assessed to identify any special needs or issues. With over a lot of hard work, the youth was finally provided with the assessment needed. It identified them as having Autism Spectrum Disorder. With these documents, we supported the mother to go to the Ministry for support. The Social worker initially said we needed 3 more assessments, but this was for kids under 6 years of age and did not apply. After this, we were referred to another Social Worker who specializes in kids with disabilities. We called the office and made an afternoon appointment. We all met and he stamped the papers saying that the family is eligible for funding! This Social Worker also began working with the youth in a one on one capacity to get to know him and work towards a further diagnosis needed for extra funding once the client turns 19. The mother was very thankful for all of our help. We all really liked the new Social Worker. It was clear he connected with the family and is interested in expanding the relationship to support the child towards achieving his fullest potential.



## Cultural Connections

One of our youth was resistant to attend the First Nations Sacred Circle at their high school. We connected with them one to one and with some persuasion they agreed to join in. After the youth attend they were happy, and said thank you! She exclaimed "that it felt like she had made a connection like a new extended family!" Since the first session the youth has continued to attend sessions regularly and is having a great time, meeting new friends. She is also coming to other cultural learning sessions. The youth told me last week that they finally have some people to hang out with during lunch time. The youth's attendance at school has also increased and overall they are much more positive about their life and outlook.

## Youth Employment Success

Cailin is a summer student hired through financial support provided by the Federal Government and through other financial supporters such as the United Way. Summer Students supply greatly needed help for programming and also provide a wonderful opportunity for the youth to develop and pursue their own career goals. Cailin is of Aboriginal ancestry and worked with the Pathways Summer Programs. She presented as a bit shy at first but really hit it off with the kids. They talked about how much they admired her and one said: "I want to be just like Cailin when I grow up!" At 22, Cailin is working towards becoming a doctor and her involvement really provided the kids with a positive role model. Cailin told us she gained so much confidence and experience through the summer. It was great getting to know the kids and being able to help out. Thanks Cailin and good luck with your studies!

## Out of School Programs

A parent has told us many times how grateful she is for Generations Homework Club and how much her son enjoys coming and benefiting from support of what she calls the equivalent of “big brothers and sisters.” This boy came to us very upset with his Mom and not wanting to be in the club. Now, he walks in with a smile on his face and is very happy to attend. He always finds games to play and is getting better at working on this homework in a focused way. It was also great as we were able to work with his Mom to pass on some of what we were doing to her. She took this home to help him further as well!

*“When I first joined up with GHC, my initial thoughts about this club were just tutoring the kids. However, after a couple of sessions I realized that GHC is about interacting with them and making a connection. I was really blown away to how amazing this club really is and I really enjoy coming here after school. In the short time I have been here, I really feel I have made an impact on kids.”*

Anonymous GHC Tutor/Mentor

*“As a parent with a limited budget, finding fun things for my kids to do out of school has been hard. Being able to attend camps offered by RYSA has been great. My kids learned about fun things to do that were low cost and local, got to meet new friends and had an amazing time. Thanks so much for what you do.”*

Local Parent

*“Now that my child is in homework club, I have no more headaches on those days. He is not allowed to play video games from Monday to Friday but on some days, he is learning to get his homework done and then ask to play video games after. He tells me when he gets home ‘Mom, I got three stickers today’. This makes him excited because he loves candy. He is doing well and I just want to thank you.”*

Mother of a GHC Participant

## Volunteer Success

*“To me, U-Write means more than just the volunteer hours that I accrue. More than just an excuse to leave the house on a Friday night. It’s a place I can come to every week, knowing that I will be treated with the same respect I give towards my peers. Each meeting is filled with obstacles and challenges. To triumph and overcome these is rewarding and gives a great sense of achievement. When I first came to U-Write, I felt like the lonely child on a deserted island. Not too much later, it was quite this opposite. The moment I enter the doors, I know I’m entering a warm and friendly environment. U-Connect will always hold a special place deep down in my heart. The experience that I have gained and the memories forged during my times here are something that you cannot put a price on and I will forever cherish these.”*

Anonymous U-Connect Member

*“Richmond Youth Service Agency has been one of the best volunteer organization I’ve joined. After all, not only do we gain knowledge about our community, we also develop valuable leadership and communication skills. I have personally organized many events with my fellow volunteers, whether it be the innovative car wash fundraiser or the exciting community dinner for Richmond families. Overall, RYSA has undoubtedly been a valuable experience for me!”*



Michael, U-Connect Member since September 2012

# Our Team

Marshall Thompson	Executive Director	Amy Yeung	Connections Youth Resource Centre
Pam Khinda	Manager of Youth Programs	Daniel Suen	Connections Youth Resource Centre
Ronald Chui	Manager of Finance and Administration	Marcella Ng	Connections Youth Resource Centre
Janet Woo	Manager of Resource Development	Louise Creedy	Connections Youth Resource Centre
Jane Reed	Richmond School Program	Angela Chan	Richmond Youth Centre
Jeremy Schroeder	Richmond School Program	Camille Rambharat	JobOptions BC
Vincent Shyong	Station Stretch	Erin Thompson	JobOptions BC
Jelica Shaw	Pathways Aboriginal Centre	Matt Vlastic	JobOptions BC
Kim Aldridge	Pathways Aboriginal Centre	Joyann Madarang	Summer Student
Rhiannon Bennett	Pathways Aboriginal Centre	Dave Track	Summer Student
Raven Barudin	Pathways Aboriginal Centre	Izabela Leszko	Summer Student

# Financial Report

	2012	2011
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 368,325	\$ 213,886
Accounts Receivable	160,941	224,059
Securities	140,890	141,902
Prepaid Expenses	10,279	7,781
Total Current Assets	<u>680,435</u>	<u>587,628</u>
Capital Assets	423,894	438,182
Total Assets	<u>\$ 1,104,329</u>	<u>\$ 1,025,810</u>

	2012	2011
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$ 94,921	\$ 96,268
Deposits	-	3,150
Deferred Revenue	253,690	195,367
Total Current Liabilities	348,611	294,785
Deferred Capital Contributions	211,004	211,662
Total Liabilities	<u>559,615</u>	<u>506,407</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	333,276	294,295
Investment in Capital Assets	211,438	225,108
Total Net Assets	<u>544,714</u>	<u>519,403</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$ 1,104,329</u>	<u>\$ 1,025,810</u>

# Our Funding Partners



# Our Funders and Supporters

## Community Leader (\$10,000 and above)

BC Assoc of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Trade Secret
Business Objects Foundation	Public Safety Canada	United Way of the Lower Mainland
Children's Aid Foundation	Richmond School District	Vancity
City of Richmond	Richmond Sunset Rotary	Vancouver Coastal Health
Coast Capital Savings	Rogers Communications	Vancouver Foundation
Government of BC	Royal Bank Community Foundation	
Helping Hands of WorkSafe BC	Service Canada	

## Mentorship Level (\$5,000 and above)

Centre for Sustainability	Kids Up Front Foundation	Rona Inc.
Dennison Chevrolet	Mr. Marcus Lai	School District #38 Employees
Enterprising Non-Profits	Mr. Peter Lee	Urban Impact Recycling
Hudson's Bay Company	Richmond Community Foundation	
Honda Canada Inc	Richmond Health Services	

## Coach Level (\$2,500 and above)

Canadian Heritage	Mr. Leon van der Poel	S&T Stereo Printers
C-Link	Mr. Marshall Thompson	Tapestry Church
CKNW Orphans Fund	Pro Claim Restoration	
Mr. Craig McLeod	Richmond Holdings Ltd.	

## Friends of RYSA (\$250 and above)

Abbacadabra	Mr. Colin McDouall	Ms. Leona Kustra
Art Home Studio	Mr. Chris Benning	Mrs. Christine Vukusic
Boys & Girls Club	Mr. Dave Kustra	Origin Organic Farms
Dash BC	Mr. Derik Yih	Oxford Learning Centre
Dorset Realty Group	Mr. Frank Peng	Perfect Lies
Geopacific Consultants Ltd.	Mr. Grante Goodwyn	Presbyterian Church of Canada
Greig Sheppard, CGA	Mr. James Brown	Pro Claim Restoration
H.J. Cambie Secondary School	Mr. James Suk	Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
Intrawest Corporation	Mr. Kevin Yu	Richmond Auto Mall Association
Langara College	Mr. Nimunter Jehman	Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre
Lansdowne Centre	Mr. Scott Wittenberg	The Fairmont Vancouver Airport
Mr. Alex Bell	Mr. Thomas Moffatt	WCB Employees Credit Union
Mr. Brian Tatam	Mr. Tony Pringle	
Ms. Carmelita Domingo	Ms. Anita Irani	

Richmond Youth Service Agency has been providing programs, services and support for children, youth and families in our community for over 35 years. By taking the time to be involved in the life of a child or young person you will make a difference in our community and our future. Each and every one of us can help. Find out about how you can get involved and make a difference today!

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