A N N U A L  R E P O R T

Connecting children, youth and families since 1974.
About the Agency

The Richmond Youth Service Agency has had some significant growth in the 2013/2014 year:

The mission of Richmond Youth Service Agency is to be a leading provider of programs and services that are responsive to the diverse needs of children, youth and families in Richmond. Our goal is to work towards a better tomorrow by connecting our community and supporting our children, youth and families to thrive and reach for their dreams. We provide programs and services for all ages including: in-school support, after-school tutoring and mentoring, day camps, youth leadership training, employment programs for adults and seniors, and we operate the only youth and Aboriginal centres within our community.

The Richmond Youth Service Agency has had some significant growth in the 2013/2014 year:

- Over 2,400 clients served
- Over ? meals served
- Over ? volunteer hours given
- ? unique programs and projects offered
We have been lucky in the past year to have so many volunteers, and partners step up to support the success of children, youth and families within our community. Whether that is helping kids succeed at school, supporting new immigrants to find employment or providing outreach support for youth and families at risk. This past year over 2400 kids, youth, families and adults benefited from the programs and supports offered by RYSA. Several thousand more learned more about their community, neighbors, local cultures and resources through events and group activities in the community. None of this would be possible without the critical support of volunteers, staff, community partners, donors and funders. We definitely have seen positive changes through the work we have done, and celebrate the successes. However, while we work hard to ensure each child, youth and family is able to thrive, there is always more to do. Based on what we have heard from clients, partners and the community in general several priorities have been set going forward. These include: affordable out of school care programs, youth housing, accessible employability programs for at risk populations, assistance for children and youth in care/translating out of care and making sure that each person is able to connect to supports and resources they need, when they need them.

The past five years have seen growth in several areas of supports we have been able to provide. This growth has not come without some challenges and change. RYSA continues to work to leverage partnerships, donations, volunteers and in kind supports to extend the critical dollars we are provided. In a review of our services during the past year we have found for every dollar provided by government RYSA is able to provide three dollars in value. A very large portion of our community relies on the services provided by RYSA. We know that our community values the impact of the work we do, and it is important that we all continue to talk about the importance of it to our neighbors, and government. As an individual you can have an impact on the kids, youth and families within our community and make a real difference.

Our approach continues to be one that is based on prevention, empowerment and ensuring that each child, youth and family is welcomed whatever their situation or needs are. It is amazing how sometimes the smallest thing can make a difference, or help someone open up about what they are going through. No one should struggle in silence, we are a community and by working to connect our local assets we can have a huge impact on the lives of our neighbors. In these moments we truly see the big picture, and we would love to share that with you. We hope that you can be part of what we do and the impact it has on those that help and those that are helped. Don’t wait until tomorrow, start now. 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.

Thank you to each and every one of you that has helped us get to where we are today, who give of themselves to benefit their neighbors and their community. Thank you for helping us make a difference!

Sincerely,

Marshall Thompson

“During this past year over 2400 kids, youth, families and adults have benefited from the programs and supports offered.”
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 local community. Some of the key programs, activities and events during the past year highlighted below.

BREAKFAST CLUB
An average of 40 children attended the regular breakfast club each day and there was approximately 70 people at our first family hot breakfast day. There was a family day/hot breakfast on the first Tuesday of every month. Breakfast club ran very smoothly and Emily did a great job at using the food we have and not wasting food. Feedback has been very positive from staff at the school and the children/parents. Working through the year, we noticed a big change in some of the kids and families. Their outlook and behaviours became more positive and they showed a lot more energy! Children in the Richmond School Program often come and get some breakfast when they arrive at school. Parents have commented that the club really helps them provide for their families by helping them stretch their budget. December saw a special visit from Santa! Our Executive Director dressed up as Santa and came in with special gifts for each and every child. Many of the kids spent a lot of time talking with Santa and few tried to sneak a peak at his reindeer when he left! This was a major hit and all of the kids older and younger!

U-Write crew who works on writing articles for youth by youth on the online magazine they created a few years ago, Clix magazine (www.clixmag.ca).

This year, U-Connect continued to find a sense of team and make new friends, this positive energy definitely went out and had an impact on the community! They created some new projects, supported some of the kids programs through funds raised and learned about what their community was really about. Many of the kids didn’t know about poverty in Richmond or some of the services that are offered locally. They received some training to support their work from Peer Net BC. The youth also thought it was important to support youth to have a voice and developed a community agreement that includes how we all want to be treated. We also learned more clearly about stereotypes, justice work, how to be an ally, and other topics that we want to apply to ourselves and live by example in our community.

The crew hosted a Halloween party for the children in our community. On October 25th, 20 kids were treated to a scary gallery (put hands into boxes and guess what you are feeling), pumpkin painting, face painting and costume-making, group games, a movie & popcorn and free t-shirts and goodie bags. The children who attended had a “funtastic time” and the U-Connect youth did a amazing job to provide a fun, no-cost activity for children in our community. Krispy Kreme doughnuts were sold again this year and made an impressive profit of $230.00 in only 2.5 hours. The money went towards purchasing the food for the annual winter dinner the youth put on to benefit those that might not have a family gathering during the holidays.

The winter dinner took place on Friday, December 13th in the Thompson Community Centre banquet hall. The U-Connect crew did an amazing job of decorating/setting up and cooking/serving food as well as mingling and entertaining guests. There were about 80 people who enjoyed a nutritious hot meal. The entertainment included a kids craft area, a jazz band with outside members contributing, a wish tree to place paper wishes on and finally there were gifts for everyone to take home. The food was served family-style on the tables and the guests were treated to chicken, twice-baked potatoes, Caesar salad and a U-Connect original – Stone Soup (a veggie

U-CO

U-Connect Crew is a group of youth who meet every Friday night from 6pm to 8pm to work as a group and positively engage and impact their community. There are two sub-groups, U-Do crew who work on creating and running projects that benefit the community and
For dessert & refreshments there was cake, ice cream, cider, hot chocolate, punch and more! There were many grateful guests, some of whom were past clients of Job Options BC and some past volunteers. It was great to have the whole event re-capped and U-Connect youth quoted in the Richmond News the following Wednesday.

This year the U-Connect completed their music video project to showcase the diversity of Richmond. They wrote, performed and filmed the music video with help from Reel Youth and a grant from the Youth Philanthropy Council. See the video here: [http://reelyouth.ca/richmond.html](http://reelyouth.ca/richmond.html)

U-Connect Crew Event Monthly Highlights:
April 2013
- Bubble Tea Fundraiser for St. Alban’s Shelter
- Earth Day Clean up Cambie Community Centre
July 2013
- Canada Day Parade Steveston Salmon Festival
October 2013
- Halloween Spooktacular Children’s event
November 2013
- Krispy Kreme fundraiser at Canadian Tire of the Winter Dinner
December 2013
- Community Winter Dinner
January 2014
- Richmond Music Video
February 2014
- Valentine’s Day Parent’s Night Out
- Term 1 wrap-up party at Planet Lazer
March 2014
- Easter Event Planning

GENERATIONS HOMEWORK CLUB
Volunteers were recruited in September and trained in October. Community partners from last year continued and two locations from previous years were generously offered to us once again. This year RYSA made a new partnership with the Richmond Public Library, who agreed to host GHC on Tuesdays.

Getting a partnership and homework club location at the Richmond Public library was a great, the library is a central location that has allowed us to serve West, Central and East Richmond with our homework clubs. There have been many students that hadn’t attended homework club previously. The clubs received support from the tutor/mentors and it was great to see the new team at this location come together!

Some of the things that we track regarding success include how the kids feel about school, are they making new friends, and has their confidence at school changed? With parents and teachers we track changes in the child’s behavior, improvements in class and attitude at home and at school. We also believe there is a huge impact on the tutor/mentors. We measure what they learned through their work, their confidence levels, how the experience helps them with their education and career choices and finally their overall knowledge about their community. During the year we achieved over 90% positive changes across the board! Amazing what a small program driven by youth can do within our community.

One Mom brought in a math test to show us how much her daughter had improved. Her daughter was getting 50% and the test she brought in after being involved with the club was 75%! Later on, the same student achieved a 90% score! The Mom thanked staff and volunteers and was very grateful for the program. She recounted coming to us in tears and really needing help at the start…she said thanks to the support not only is her daughter doing so much better but she (the mom) was feeling a huge relief and less stressed! Tutor/mentors have commented that her daughter is a very bright girl and just needed some additional time spent with her, more encouragement and help to focus.

“I really enjoyed working with the children and watching them grow and open up. It was such a satisfying feeling when a child who was shy starting to open up and talk to me. I built a relationship with the kids and I am really sad that I can’t continue to term 2. I had a fantastic time. Homework club was a wonderful experience for me. I had a great time and I hope to do it again next year.”  – Samantha, grade 11 student, GHC Hugh Boyd
DAY CAMP

The Spring Break camp ran for two weeks, five days per week during the Richmond School District March Break. This was the first time that before and after care services were offered to parents for an extra charge. Enrollment in before and after care was relatively low compared to the number of children in camp.

Camp activities included but were not limited to: two hours of physical activity per day, (one hour outside and one hour of free gym time) children preparing healthy snacks, one out-trip to a nature park, one to an indoor swimming pool, semi-structure craft time to allow for imagination, socialization and creativity, free play time with classroom toys to enhance social skills. The 2014 Spring Break Camp had 22 kids participate. The outcomes for the children included: providing learning based activities, encouraging physical activity, increasing social networks and promoting low cost or fee activities for kids and families in the community. Children commented that they enjoyed spending time with the youth volunteers. Parent outcomes for the camp included that the camp was accessible, affordable and that the children enjoyed themselves. Children were polled during the camp in small groups by the volunteers verbally using the “shout out” method of data collection. They were asked about what they enjoyed and what they wanted to see more of. Both parents and children really enjoyed and valued the camp and asked about future programming.

One Mom was very concerned about her daughter’s self-esteem because of some health issues and struggles with her peers in school. She was very successful in camp and was social with the other children. She made new friends, went down the water slides for the first time and gained confidence to try new things. Her anxiety went down and her confidence went up after attending camp. Mom was so happy with the impact!

Summer camp ran through July and August for a full eight weeks and five days per week. Camp filled up quickly again this year, with registration full and a wait-list within two weeks of announcing registration was open. We limited families to register for two weeks of camp per child to allow more children the opportunity to participate. This year participants got to go on two to three outings per week, with one outing per week being a BBQ at a local park, one in Richmond and the other in Vancouver. The camp took public transit, made healthy snacks, played games together, made creative projects and all students had successes including those integrated from Richmond School Program.

During the camp, 90% of children indicated increases in indicators that reflected social skill development, increased 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 very 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.

“I had the best birthday ever spending it with everyone at camp.” – Participant, age 10

One camper who came to camp would otherwise spend his days at home playing video games. He had such a positive experience at camp that in the weeks following staff saw him outside riding his bike. When they asked him about it, he said "he didn't feel like playing video games but instead wanted to be outside."

The father of an RSP student commented on how he was very grateful for our camp. He mentioned how he felt at ease to have his son participate in camp because he would not be successful in any other camp without the extra support and flexibility we provide to him. At school he works with a one to one worker. The other children were inclusive and understanding of this boys needs which was great to see. Many children learned new life skills, including basic swimming, cleaning, cooking and how to ride public transit. Many children opened up as camp went on and they felt more comfortable to share their voices. Some even gained confidence to learn from their experience and invite their families out to some of the places we visited.

“I don’t feel tired when I wake up, I feel energy and I feel happy at camp.” – Participant, age 9

Program Statistics (April 1st, 2013 - March 31st, 2014)

Volunteer Hours Given:
- U-Connect Crew — 2,200 hours
- Generations Homework Club — 1,250 hour
- Spring Break Camp — 404 hours
- Breakfast Club — 193 hours

Amount of Children/Youth Served Per Program:
- Summer Camp 2013 — 58 total, 54 different families
- U-Connect Crew — 72 total, 72 different families
- Generations Homework Club — 52 different children, 50 different families
• Spring Break Camp 2014 — 22 total, 21 different families
• Breakfast Club — 60 different children, 53 different families
• Total volunteer hours, all programs — 5,074
• Total different clients served: 268, different client families — 250

YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

In January 2013 we received funding to add an Asian Youth Outreach Worker. Daniel began outreach almost immediately by connecting with students in school as well as with professionals in the community. His caseload was maxed by the second month and waitlist has been in place since then. There were also referral requests for services in surrounding areas such as Vancouver, Burnaby, and Delta. During the year over 78 youth who have faced with multiple barriers received one to one support. These barriers included: academic, social skills, life skills, substance misuse, addictions, isolation, relationship issues, family conflicts, sexual orientation, unemployment, housing, settlement, moderate mental health challenges and others. Over 90% of the youth reported that they had made progress towards their goals and a positive change in their situations.

The General Youth Outreach positions began in September 2014 and have served 68 Richmond youth in both a group and one to one capacity. Workshops were delivered with topics such as: goal setting, employment readiness, post secondary planning, and other life skill components. Also additional community agencies requested groups to be facilitated for participants in their programs. As a result, we have attached a position to the Young Parents Support Group locally run, and we are developing a new teen girl support group that will start in the fall and focus on building resiliency in and preventing exploitation of teenage girls.

In both one to one and group workshops there was a trend of youth looking for employment and needing help building resumes, applying for positions, and learning interview skills. With the closure of the Youth Employment Centre, many youth fall between the cracks and aren’t comfortable accessing adult focused services. Along with employment readiness some of the major topics of discussion in one to one settings were stress management, conflict resolution, housing, bullying, mental health, self harm, and sexual health. During the program client self reporting showed significant positive changes for youth in self esteem, community awareness of services and supports, and a decrease in isolation related feelings.

Total YO Referrals: 128
Total # of files opened: 117
Total # of workshops given: 38
Total # of workshop participants: 91
Outreach/Short Term Clients: 450

Client Demographics:
ROGERS CONNECTIONS

The program currently runs at 6 different locations. Our ratios of tutors to students remains about 1:3 which works well at most locations as students tend to study in groups. Approximately 60% of students who registered this year had attended Rogers Connections in previous years. During the summer we ran the program four days per week, and also offered workshops and outings which were well received.

“You and the volunteer mentors brought in great energy and atmosphere to this classroom supporting the students in this school! The students really need mentors like you guys to guide them and interact with them!” – A Resource Room teacher in Richmond Secondary

Success Story:
Anthony is a Grade 9 student at Cambie Secondary School. He joined RCP in 2012. He was struggling in his Math 8 Essential class and he often needed the one-to-one support for his Math homework during the session. He received a C+ for his overall Math grades last year. He got his report card for the first term of this academic year. This year he is in Math 9 Essential this year and he is getting an A! Anthony feels more confident about school, especially in Math. He has the highest mark out of all the Math 9 Essential classes. Anthony thinks that RCP helps him improved a lot in learning throughout the year and he is more focus in class.

“It’s nice to see the student(s) that I work with slowly improving, not just homework but even their attitude towards school changed!” – A tutor

Rogers 2013 Program Statistics:
• Number of youth participants impacted — 507
• Number of volunteers in 2013 — 45

2013 SUMMER CAMP

The 2013 Summer Camp was a day program hosted by Richmond Youth Service Agency (RYSA) with the generous support of Vancouver Coastal Health, the United way, The government of BC, the government of Canada, Kids UpFront, Terra Nova Sharing Farm and the Richmond School District for Aboriginal children, and youth between the ages of 8-24. 31 Aboriginal children and youth participated in the summer camp. Two days a week were devoted to ages 8-13 and 2 days a week for ages 14-24. The camp was a unique opportunity for 32 Aboriginal children and youth to have fun, make new friends and learn more about their culture. The camp combined fun, recreation, culture and learning new skills so that everyone had fun and learned something during their time. This past summer we organized a number of day trips to Kalw Howa Village, Capilano Suspension Bridge, outdoor swimming, gardening and harvesting. We also had a number of cultural workshops such as cedar weaving, drum making, powwow dancing, making medicine bags, and storytelling.

“We loved this camp! We made new friends and had fun. Going to the swimming pool was the best part of my summer!”

“We had a great time this summer! We learned a lot and made new friends!” – A camper
RICHMOND SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Richmond School Program (RSP) is a collaborative program located at Blundell Elementary School. The program consists of two classrooms, working with primary Grades K-3 and intermediate Grades 4-7 students with social, emotional and behavioural challenges that have prevented them from success to date in a mainstream classroom. Each class has a maximum of six students who receive support from classroom staff, individual and family counselling from the Vancouver Coastal Health and one-to-one and group support with a Child and Family Worker (CFW). During their time at the RSP, the students work on goals and strategies to help them become more successful at home, school and the community. Students also receive support from a Speech and Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist to get assessments and medication from one of our 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), just to name a few. RYSA CFWs work within the classroom, provide one-to-one work on strategies to help them get through tough times, help integrate students back to their home schools and provide out of school support towards their social, learning and engagement goals with the students in the community. We attend many meetings with parent, schools and community agencies to help the students be successful in as many areas as possible.

Currently, we have a caseload of 9 students in the program and we continue to have follow-up contact with 2 students who have graduated and two others who have moved in the school year. Our CFWS also work with groups of students to become a positive role model in social situations.

Over the year, we have had success with 3 students fully transitioning back to their home schools. Current teachers have noticed a remarkable improvement compared to when these students had originally left the school for the Richmond School Program. We still maintain a relationship with our transitioned students with regular visits to aid and support their transition. We also have 5 students who are integrating back to their home schools for portions of their week with some receiving assistance while some are without, and this too is going well. In October, we hosted a successful Family Night where families connected to the RSP would come to enjoy an evening of food as well as fun games that promoted interactions amongst family members in a positive, comfortable atmosphere. We were also happy this year that we have been able to support some of the kids to participate in mainstream camp activities during spring break and Summer with the help from other funders.

STATION STRETCH

Station Stretch is a Grade 10 completion program for students who have experienced a disruption to their schooling. The primary objective of the program is to accelerate student achievement but this is dependent on the student’s performance in academic course work, attendance, and conduct at the school. The school typically enrolls up to 45 students at any time and provides service to more than 65 students over a school year as they achieve their goals and new students enter.

Many of the students that enroll at Stretch commonly have attendance, academic, or problems with conduct, but beneath these surface behaviours are a multitude of issues that are often present such as: mental health, family problems, substance misuse, and issues such as bullying. The Youth and Family Worker (YFW) at Stretch forms working relationships with the students and address these types of issues through counseling and support with a goal of improving personal and educational outcomes for the participants. The participants are supported to completed their Grade 10 course work and then the YFW helps transition them into their new schools, follows up with them, provides them support while they adjust to their new environment, and continues to work with students on issues that they had at Stretch.

Vince helped me in one of the most scary and difficult times in my life. I was afraid I was pregnant and didn’t know what to do. I worked with Vince for a long time and felt comfortable and trusted him. I still remember I couldn’t bring myself to say what was wrong but he got me to a place where I could finally tell him what was happening. Vince was so understanding and supportive and knew what to do. He took me to the youth clinic and we met with a Health Nurse there. Thankfully it was a false alarm and the nurse helped me a lot too. The most important thing about the experience was he was not judgmental and calm about the situation. It’s important to have people like him around.

Riley
Pathways Aboriginal Centre

Pathways Aboriginal Centre (Pathways) has offered a variety of programs and activities for 8 years. Funding for the centre has been provided through a variety of partners including; Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY), Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Strategies (MAVUS), The Government of Canada, Vancouver Coastal Health, The Richmond School district (SD38), The United Way, The Government of British Columbia and several other donors. Pathways continues to build on previous years by listening to our community members voices to ensure they have access to appropriate and culturally based supports, resources and activities that promote the health and wellness, skill development, leadership, cultural awareness and school participation within the Aboriginal community of Richmond. Pathways supported 277 Aboriginal children, youth and their families in our community. Through events, activities and celebrations such as National Aboriginal Day, bingo night, powwow drumming and a winter feast celebration we connected with over 729 community members and worked with over 25 agencies and partners during the last year. There have been many great memories this past year including: The Gathering Our Voices Youth Conference in Vancouver, monthly family nights, and the amazing progress and shows of powwow dancing by the kids.

The Aboriginal Family Arts Program (AFAP)

The Aboriginal Family Arts Program (AFAP) provided opportunities for Aboriginal Families and/or caregivers of Aboriginal Children and Youth to engage together as a family, gain awareness of the importance of health and wellness, utilize art as a positive outlet and connect with their Cultural Roots. The program has provided a total of 11 program sessions which included: 9 Cultural Workshops, a community event and a family self-care day sponsored by Future Hair Salon and School! Families were treated to a spa and self care day, something many had never done! The program also organized 3 clothing exchanges, held a number of workshops for parents and caregivers on self care, child development and understanding local resources.

“I learned so many fun things to do with my daughter that don’t cost a lot.”

PATHWAYS ABORIGINAL OUTREACH EDUCATION PROGRAM (PAOEP)

Pathways Aboriginal Outreach Education Program (PAOEP) is a partnership with RYSA, the Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health. The program works with the school district, local counsellors and social service workers, community agencies, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFASS), Ministry of Social Development, Aboriginal Court workers, the Vancouver Friendship Centre and other RYSA programs to ensure that Aboriginal children, youth and families are supported and are able to access any additional resources they need. The program goals are to promote health and wellness, success at school and at home, and to provide supports and services with respect of the diverse cultures within the Aboriginal community. This past year we supported 84 different children, youth and their families. The program provided over 381 individual counseling sessions and 91 educational support sessions. The program produced 7 unique newsletters and these were distributed to over 200 community contacts on our mailing list. The PAOEP organized 13 community and family events with over 305 people attending events and workshops this past year including: a traditional talking circle, button blanket and other traditional art workshops, gardening workshops at the OSKAYAK Garden, ongoing art therapy group for children, traditional sweat lodge teachings, a community winter celebration, monthly family activity nights, Ravens Homework Club, tours to local colleges and universities and leadership opportunities.
RAVENS HOMEWORK CUB

This unique program is made possible with the support of the Richmond School District, VanCity, Childrens Aid Foundation of Canada, the BC Government, and local donors. RHC is free and homework support is provided from volunteer tutor/mentors and Pathways staff. This year 14 high school students were trained as tutors and mentors and provided support to 17 elementary aged children. Weekly RHC activities include tutoring, and fun activities such as a fitness challenge, holiday parties and even a game of laser tag! Combining fun with learning helps many of these kids that are having challenges at school. Our goal is to help them improve their confidence in core subjects and to view learning and school as fun.

OSKAYAK Youth Program

The goal of the OSKAYAK Youth Program (OYP) connects with urban Aboriginal youth between the ages of 10 to 24. During the past year 93 participants and their families participated in and received support from the OYP. The program works with children and youth in developing cultural awareness, life skills, social and community connections, and supporting career and educational goals. The program provides an opportunity for participants to interact and learn from Elders, professionals, mentors, and each other. The program provides a safe place for youth to explore their culture, be themselves and have fun.

“Being supported by someone who cares, I know that I can do this thing called life.”

Youth participate in cultural, life skills, career and leadership development workshops. This past years workshops and activities included: attending the Gathering Our Voices Conference, powwow dancing and drumming, painting, dream catchers, carving workshops and a series of Halkomelem Language workshops. Leadership, tutoring and mentoring workshops were ongoing throughout the fiscal year. Some of the other activities and supports included: providing youth with food safe, attending career fairs and supporting youth looking for employment or helping them find an educational path. During the year over 90% of youth indicated increased support and connections to help them reach their goals. In addition 10 youth found employment through the program and 8 decided on a career path and received support to apply for training or post secondary education. One of the core values of the program is to be youth driven. The centre has a youth council - the OSKAYAK Youth Council (OYC). They worked hard to plan activities, raise funds for youth focused projects and to make a difference in the community. The OYC met monthly and members helped organize National Aboriginal Day celebrations, volunteered as tutors, were involved with community consultations and provided support regionally by participating in advisories for the funder and Vancouver Coastal Health.

“In the OSKAYAK Youth Program I have grown as a person, and I am able to express myself freely knowing I have support.”

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY

National Aboriginal Day Celebration was held on Saturday June 21th 2013 at Richmond City Centre. The celebration was organized with the collaboration of the Richmond School District, The city of Richmond, Richmond Youth Service Agency, Pathways Aboriginal Centre and an additional 15 Aboriginal youth volunteers. There was an excellent turn out of performers and community members. Over 200 visitors came to watch the traditional drum and dance groups, story tellers and to feast on traditional salmon burgers served by a local Elder. The day was opened by an Elder, the Mayor and other local city council members and funders. Unique to this year’s celebrations was the recognition of the Aboriginal graduates of 2013 from the School District. All Aboriginal Richmond graduates from grades 7 and grades 12 were recognized, brushed with cedar and cleansed with traditional medicines. The celebration was a fun day that allowed the greater community a chance to learn about Aboriginal culture while sharing traditional songs and dancing together. This was a great moment given that Pathways has provided support to many of these youth! This year we achieved a 95% graduation rate!

“I enjoyed being brushed with sage and cleansed with medicines, it made me feel powerful.”
Job Options BC – Richmond/South Delta

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 employment.

The program continues to make an exceptional impact on the community of Richmond/South Delta by providing people the necessary skills to successfully transition into the labor market. Individuals facing barriers to employment enroll themselves in the Job Options program as a way to build self esteem and learn how to find a permanent position that suits their experience. From 2010-2013, RYSA assisted 319 local unemployed individuals enhance their employability skills, and sharpen their occupational skills through 27 program cycles; of which 22 were held in Richmond and 5 in Ladner. With the completion rate of 96% and an average employment rate of 86% (after 6 month follow up), the program received excellent feedback from program participants, employers and the local community. To date the program has provided wage subsidy support to 52 participants out of which 50 (96%) participants were still employed at the end of their wage subsidy contracts.

The program offered six program cycles during the previous year and served 94 clients. The employment preparation services the clients received were also enhanced as the program regularly invited industry professionals, recruiters and human resource managers providing opportunities for participants to acquire updated labour market information and learn about their hiring practices. In addition, participants were assisted by job placements and referrals to employers for their available positions. Participants also accessed skill based trainings such as First Aid, Food Safe, Fork Lift, Sage50 Quick Books, MS Word and Excel as well as customized trainings in computers facilitated by the program staff.

This year we launched a follow up survey with past participants of up to 2 years prior. The findings showed that 84% were still gainfully employed and progressing well in their field of work. The program participants expressed profound satisfaction and shared their positive experience of attending the program and the impact it had on their success today.

Highlights

Cynthia Lee, age 29, lacked the work experience, skills, and confidence to make the transition into her field of interest. Cynthia worked in Early Childhood Education, but decided that she wanted to make a transition into the customer service field. However, she had a lot of anxiety about going on interviews. Cynthia joined the Job Options program to learn job search and interview skills. Cynthia sought support from the JOBC team to overcome her interview anxiety. She participated fully in all classroom activities and became a valuable classmate to others who struggled with their computer skills. In the 3rd week of the program, Cynthia went on an in-person cold call to Shoe Warehouse. She was called in for an interview and after presenting her references, she was offered the position at Sales Associate. Cynthia is now working part-time hours and is looking forward learning new skills, especially in the area of retail customer service. Cynthia attributes her success to the coaching she received while in the Program.
Diogene Niyomeigabo, age 42, arrived in Canada 2 years ago from Rwanda and worked on improving his English and obtaining his forklift certification. He registered for the Job Options Program with minimal knowledge of the Canadian labour market and a lack of job search skills. Having recognized his lack of fluency in English, Diogene worked very hard to complete assignments and group activities during the program. He would often stay after class to ask questions and put in a great effort to ensure that he was learning everything. After completing the first 2 weeks of the program, Diogene learned how to write a resume and improved his interview skills and was able to ace the interview with Dominion Woodworking for a General Labour position! Diogene is learning many new skills at work and is enjoying his first job in Canada.

Tatiana Chudinova, age 27, joined the Job Options Program in hopes of learning the job search and employability skills to become financially independent and provide for her young son. She had minimal Canadian work experience and was interested in obtaining a position in the hospitality field for which she has her bachelor's degree in. Tatiana's motivation to participate in class and complete all assignments found her ready to apply for a Server position at River Rock Casino & Resorts. At the interview, she impressed the hiring manager and was offered the position shortly after. Tatiana is now working full-time hours and is able to provide for her son. She thanks the Job Options staff for all of the support and encouragement they provided to her.

Sonnet Martin, age 30, is a recent immigrant with a lack of local work experience, lack of training in Canadian computerized accounting programs, and a 6 years gap in her employment history, Sonnet Martin achieved her goal of finding meaningful employment. Sonnet is happily employed at MacDonald Detweiler and Associates as a Treasury Assistant/Accountant. Through a simulated job application exercise in the Job Options Program, Sonnet was encouraged by Job Options facilitators to apply to her dream job. Using her revised resume/cover letter and new interview techniques, Sonnet was the successful candidate selected from a very large pool of candidates. Sonnet considers her time at Job Options and all of the knowledge she gained as the reason she was successful in her job search.

Wendell Gonyea, age 63, considered his age, lack of computer and job search skills and not knowing what he would be capable of doing and which jobs would be suitable for him after going through and having recovered after medical surgery as barriers to employment. Upon taking the JobOptions program, he was able to set clear goals and objectives for himself and upon assessing his own skills & abilities and acquiring job search skills he soon developed confidence to apply for jobs matching his skills focusing on potential employers in the manufacturing industry. Wendell, from never having had an interview in the last 20 years, went on to contact 13 employers on a particular day and had meaningful and productive meetings with hiring managers at most of these companies. Soon after completing the program, Wendell applied for a maintenance supervisor position at a property management company, went through a two-interview process to be successfully employed as a property care-taker for two properties in Vancouver including Olympic Village. Most recently Wendell has received a promotion to work downtown at a luxury building site off Coal Harbor area.

Cody Fry, age 26, had done many different odd jobs, but was struggling to find a career path for himself. He struggles with low self-esteem, confidence, and motivation, however he overcame all of these barriers while at the Job Options Program. Cody put his 100% effort forward everyday and interviewed at Lulu Island Winery for a Customer Service position. The employers were so impressed by his skills that they called him back almost right away and offered him the position. Cody is now working full-time hours and is also continuing to pursue his passion in Graphic Design. He has meetings lined up to explore doing some freelance work on the side. He wrote the Job Options team this kind message:

My first day was great! The staff is very fun and friendly and the workplace is nice. I'll be a wine expert in no time. However I do miss all my instructors and classmates at RYSA. The Job Options Program has really helped me get out of a rut that I was in while also teaching me many valuable skills that give me the confidence to take control of my career path. I am very thankful that you three chose to give me this opportunity.

Thanks,
Cody
**Ella Tang**, age 42, immigrated to Canada 5 years ago but was not able to find employment; having recently upgraded her skills and education in Financial Management at BCIT, she considered her lack of work experience, language capabilities and networking skills to be the most problematic aspect of her job search. After taking the program she was able to gain her self-confidence and was able to market her skills to employers, soon she was being called for interviews. Ella is now gainfully employed in an accounting position at a reputable company in Richmond. Here’s Ella wrote in her email:

**Pleasant Experience with JobOptions**

As a recent participant of the program of JobOptions, I highly recommend this program to you, who are seeking for help for new employment. I participated in this program in the late August. Soon after I started this program, I found out it was really what I was looking for. The program teaches us how to write a resume, how to search jobs online, how to prepare for job interview, and so on. It even offers subsidy to us, which I didn’t expect before. Staff of this program is very professional that they coached and supported us with their broad of knowledge.

Being the JobOptions was an excellent learning experience that I entered this program with anxiety, but walked out with confidence. With their help, I was able to landed on a full-time position in my field.

If you are looking for help for your career, this is a place where you should run to.

Good luck everyone!

Ella

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**URBAN OLDER WORKER PROGRAM**

RYSA has offered four successful cycles of the Urban Older Worker program since October 2012. This program is an employment and skills training program that helps unemployed individuals over the age of 55 gain the skills, confidence and experience needed to find employment. Participants were considered multi-barriered, unemployed and had often not been successful in their efforts to find work for over a year prior to participating.

The Urban Older Worker program is comprised of 12 weeks of group and individualized programming. Clients are required to attend five weeks of in-class group workshops focused on employment readiness for mature workers. These workshops are focused on vocational assessments, job search skills training, life skills training, employment counselling, basic skills upgrading, and customized job search coaching along with ongoing support. After the classroom phase clients transition to the work experience and follow up portion of the program where they receive continued support for a six month period. Participants are provided with short term training, access to onsite computer training and take part in work experience opportunities that prepares them for the work place.

For each of the program intakes, a strong commitment and enthusiasm was evident from mature participants to complete the program and to gain new skills and overcome the barriers to return to work. The program completion rate is 100% with an average employment rate 64%. The program has provided wage subsidy support to 3 participants to acquire specific work experience with an employer.

The following feedback indicates that this is a highly needed program to serve the needs of our mature job seekers as well as a good reflection on the impact the program has had on those who attend it. The success rate was not as high as the regular group, but this often reflected participants having health issues, family challenges and even having to move back to their home country after participating in the program.

**Highlights**

**Ron Bell**, age 64, joined the Urban Older Workers Program with the hope that he would be able to make a successful transition into a new career. After working in supply chain management for over 20 years, Ron took a course to become an ESL teacher. Although qualified, he found it difficult to secure gainful employment. Ron was an eager participant in the Program, often going above and beyond the Program’s expectations. After applying to several jobs online as well as making many in-person cold calls, Ron was hired for two part time positions as an ESL instructor and took on a third position a week later. He is elated to have the opportunity to utilize his teaching skills and to gain experience in this new field. He attributes his success to his time spent in the Program. He wrote the following email:
Frances MacMillian, age 60, struggled to secure long term work and suffered from low self esteem and motivation. Fran’s goal when entering the Job Options Program was to leave the retail industry and work in the office/ administrative field. She was able to secure an Administrative position at Hi-Design Cabinets in Delta, BC. She is working full-time hours and is making above minimum wage! Fran attributes her success in finding employment to the time she spent in the Job Options program. Fran overcame several personal issues in order to strive for her goal. With the support of the Job Options team and their extensive resume and interview preparation, Fran was ready to secure this position for herself.

Gwen Cameron, age 60, was a librarian with a 20 year gap in her employment history, but she is now happily employed at Indigo/Chapters in a full-time Customer Service position. Gwen interviewed for this position 2 weeks after she completed the classroom phase of the program and was offered the job shortly after. Gwen attributes her success at the interview to the coaching and encouragement she received at Job Options. Gwen came into the Job Options program with little confidence in her skills, but left the program with the job search tools and life skills necessary to successfully find employment independently! Congrats Gwen on finding a job in a field related to your experience and interests!

Amy Wan, age 56, had no recent or local work experience since immigrating to Canada 16 years ago. Having worked in administrative roles in the past, Amy was interested in working as an Office Assistant and joined the Urban Older Workers Program to learn how to properly job search, write a resume, and how to be successful at the interview. Upon completion of the Classroom Phase of the program, Amy was dedicated to applying for work and would come into the RYSA office at least 2-3 times a week to check in and prepare for her in-person employer contacts. Amy was called in for several interviews and was finally successful in obtaining a position as an Office Assistant for a company in Vancouver. Amy attributes her success to the support she received while in the UOW program.

Fredrick De Zilwa, age 64, cited a lack of local work experience and his age as barriers to finding meaningful employment. Fredrick also was unsure of his career direction as he had several years of experience in the financial sector and also managed his own business. Upon joining the Urban Older Workers Program, Fredrick’s career goals became clear. He was passionate about helping people and wanted to enter the security field. He used all of the employment tools given to him by the Program to write a powerful resume that got him an on-the-spot interview with Paladin Security. Fredrick’s efforts paid off when he was offered the job and was also given training by the company at no cost to him. He is very thankful for the support he received while in the program. He wrote the following email:

Dear Cecil, Mursal and Vanessa,

My sincerest thanks to all three of you for your encouragement, support and help. I attended the Paladin Security job fair this morning and after a rigorous selection process was given the job, subject to passing the BST and First Aid Training courses which will begin on Monday, 17 June.

Thanks to your persistent encouragement which was vital in raising my self-esteem I have been successful. This is another feather in all your caps which I should be brought to the attention of the Ministry of Tourism, Jobs and Skills Training and how you have played a vital role in helping me from Training to securing jobs.

Very best regards
Fredrick

“Thank you! Thanks for the lively presentations that got the group off and running. I was there to learn and I did. I have also been offered a 3rd ESL job that would fit in with the hours I have already committed. I will visit them to discuss the details in the next couple of days. I will be back to thank you all personally in the near future.”
Our Staff

The past year has been filled with successes that include youth finding their first job, working with a child so they are more confident at school, and seeing families connecting at local fun events and activities. During this past year over 2000 kids, youth, families and adults have benefited from the programs and supports offered through RYSA with thousands more attending community events and activities that helped them learn about their community and develop stronger connections within it. This has all been accomplished with the critical support of volunteers, staff, community partners, donors and funders. While the past year has been filled with stories of success for many programs and people we work with, we also know there continue to be challenges in our community. Affordable out of school care programs, youth housing, accessible employment programs and ensuring that people know about and are able to find the supports they need are things we are continuing to work on.
## Financial Report

### Assets

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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Cash</td>
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<td><strong>Capital Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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### Liabilities and Net Assets

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$676,426</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Our Funding Partners

RYSA would like to thank the following partners for their generous contributions and support. Without them, services offered by RYSA would cease to exist. Thank you!

[Logos of various sponsors and organizations]
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