

## FOSL Budget Presentation

April 14, 2015

Carrie Bercic & Sarah Macaulay

Friends of the School Library greatly appreciates this opportunity to appear before the Vancouver School Board. We represent hundreds of parents, educators, and library advocates from schools across Vancouver.

My name is Carrie Bercic. I have two children that have gone through the public school system – my youngest having graduated in June. I am the current Friends of the School Library (FOSL) Chair. Over the last 17 years I have volunteered in school libraries, sat on various library committees, worked with teacher-librarians, and spoken on numerous occasions about library funding.

Hello, my name is Sarah Macaulay and I am a member of FOSL. My son is in grade 5 at Dickens Elementary. My son loves the school library. For many children in Vancouver, their only experience with books, libraries, and applied digital technology occurs within their school libraries. In fact, for many Vancouver students, the school library is the only library they see. The school library provides so much more than just book exchange for our students. Collaborative teaching with classroom teachers is essential to student learning. As well, in addition to purchasing and maintaining collections that support curriculum and foster student engagement, teacher-librarians also make possible the informed use of online resources. The library is the one place in a school that serves as a hub for all students. It is also the one place that provides a safe haven for those children who don't fare as well in the busy cafeterias, hallways and on the sports fields. In fact, it is the one place in the school that is for the use of every single student and staff member. **Good libraries -- well-stocked, comfortable, welcoming, and always open with a teacher-librarian on hand to help -- send a message to students and that message is this: *This school values reading, learning and literacy; it values you and your future.***

There have been numerous studies that link academic achievement with school libraries. Research indicates that the single greatest predictor for student success (after the absence of severe poverty) is a well-stocked, well-staffed school library<sup>1</sup>. A recent study that looked specifically at Vancouver schools had these very same findings<sup>2</sup>. These are concrete numbers that we should be looking at.

One of the most pressing issues facing school libraries is inequity in the district. **FOSL requests that the district set minimum staffing levels for all school libraries.** We have schools with nearly 700 students that don't have a full time TL. We have schools with around 480 students, some with 1 FTE and others as low as .6 FTE. The inequity of service from school to school is simply unacceptable.

**FOSL also requests that where library prep time exists, it be preserved.**

Last year, the board imposed a one-time cut of \$50,000 to library budgets. **FOSL is hoping that this funding will now be restored.**

**We also request that the Teacher-Librarian Consultant position cut 5 years ago from full time to a .4 mentor position be reinstated.**

FOSL would like to stress that if literacy is truly a priority in this district - school libraries must be kept open all day, adequately stocked and equipped, and properly staffed with qualified teacher-librarians.

We would like to specifically thank the board for their efforts toward computer hardware equity in school libraries last year and this year. We would also like to thank the board for their hard work and dedication and wish you much luck with this difficult task ahead of you.

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1) <http://www.slj.com/2013/03/research/librarian-required-a-new-study-shows-that-a-full-time-school-librarian-makes-a-critical-difference-in-boosting-student-achievement/#>

2) <http://bctf.ca/bctla/pub/documents/2014/17-1haycock.pdf>

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# Reconciliation in Action:

Towards Building Healthy Communities



A Collective Impact Place-Based Strategy by **Our Place**





This booklet was created on behalf of [OUR PLACE](#) and [ABORIGINAL LIFE IN VANCOUVER ENHANCEMENT \(ALIVE\) SOCIETY](#)

By: Salish Sea Productions

Design and Graphics by: Bracken Hanuse Corlett and Amanda Strong.

The **Reconciliation in Action** booklet was developed in response to citizens inquiring about the **place-based model** and how it works in the inner city of Vancouver. Our Place dedicates this booklet to all our relations, community, and everyone else who is interested in joining, creating and envisioning healthier lives and communities in Vancouver, on unceded Salish territory.

Backgrounder: An in-depth Vancouver Sun series on the history of the DTES by Lori Culbert & Pete McMartin Summer 2014.

[Downtown Eastside: 260 agencies, housing sites crowd Downtown Eastside](#)

[Vancouver's Downtown Eastside is a ghetto made by outsiders](#)

[How are other Canadian cities dealing with homelessness?](#)

[The future of the Downtown Eastside: Should they stay or should they go?](#)

A new way of doing politics: Metro Vancouver Alliance (MVA).

"Almost 80% of Indigenous people live off reservation and the majority of us live in the urban context and that's why MVA is so important for us in that it can enable us to be seen, be heard and be included; and that's one of the things that's missing in all levels of politics.." Scott Clark

[Watch the MVA video to learn more](#)





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**Thank you**





## RECONCILIATION IN ACTION: WHERE CHANGE HAPPENS, 2014

On June 20th 2014, Our Place, with Vancouver's inner city residents and community partners, gathered to celebrate Reconciliation in Action – an annual community-powered celebration and conference held at Ray-Cam Co-Operative Centre, built upon the core principles of openness, mutual respect, inclusion, understanding and collaboration. In other words: Reconciliation in Action.

The intention of Reconciliation in Action is to shine a spotlight on the importance of PEOPLE, PLACE and POLICY in meaningful community engagement and development supporting grounded reconciliation. Our Place recognizes that reconciliation with the past and building a healthy, sustainable future for the community requires all parts of our community (Indigenous and non- Indigenous) to be involved. This is not a new process, in that, Indigenous people have been leading the way for reconciliation through transformative learning and positive change as we build more inclusive and reflective communities.

Wendy Grant John- Musqueam Councillor

"As we [the Musqueam community] struggled as a community... we tried many different models to ensure that we were being open, transparent and inclusive of each and every one of our 1200 band members... We came upon something called "comprehensive community planning", and I'm here to tell you we have an entirely different result in our community. We had an approach driven by the community... I really compliment the people here for doing this because I think the success you are going to find at the end is immeasurable"

Watch Wendy Grant John's full presentation [here](#)

### Musqueam First Nation: A Comprehensive Sustainable Community Development Plan

By placing reconciliation within the place-based frame, Reconciliation in Action celebrates and acknowledges that cooperation and solidarity among First Nations, Vancouver citizens, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal service providers, local businesses, unions, artists, faith groups and all levels of government in a defined PLACE is key to achieving collective impact and creating positive and sustainable changes in our neighborhood. The paradigm shift we are building is founded on the basic understanding that "children and families grow up in communities not programs."

The presence of over 40 community organizations at the Ray-Cam gymnasium showcased the Our Place Village, united and working together to be agents of positive change. While we often hear the cliché "It takes a village to raise a child", Our Place demonstrated what that village looks like with inner city children and families. The event was well-attended by residents and community leaders (including politicians and other policymakers) and sent a message that the time is now to take up the challenge of re-aligning current social, economic, environmental policies, and programs to reflect the realities of the inner city residents.





Dr. Evan Adams

On Reconciliation: "Reconciliation for me is about ... equality or equity. We know in this country there are lots of us who have and lots of us who have not. We know there is a great inequality between those who are rich and those who are poor".



Watch Dr. Evan Adam's full presentation [here](#)





# The Collective Impact Place-Based Strategy

## PLACE-BASED THINKING

Place-based thinking is a holistic way of looking at how communities evolve. It acknowledges unique and complex local realities including:

- Community norms and values
- Policies that affect the community and its members
- Agencies providing services in that area
- The built environment or physical features of a community

## A PLACE-BASED APPROACH

A place-based approach is an integrated strategy, designed to target and address complex issues arising in a particular community. It pays special attention to the physical, social, political, economic and service realities of a place and recognizes communities as an environment where the existing tangled web of services can be reorganized with its residents in a way that better meets their needs and aspirations towards empowerment and choice.

As a strategy, the place based approach aims to:

- Promote citizen engagement and create leaders within the community
- Mobilize and coordinate existing resources to respond to local needs
- Build new alliances across diverse sectors and strengthen existing community connections
- Use evidence-based outcomes for ongoing development of the strategy

## REASONS FOR PLACE-BASED

The place-based approach builds capacity within communities to collectively identify, analyze and implement community programs and services which are consistently monitored and evaluated for their accountability to the defined principles and outcomes of the strategy. The place-based model draws on the social determinants of health and derives its ethos from a strengths-based empowerment model. It values and draws upon the diverse skills and gifts of each place or community and seeks to build leaders within the community, equipped to tackle issues impacting their community. As such, the place-based approach promotes people-centred, participatory service delivery that engages the community in life-enhancing practises. We seek to build a healthy community for all, one which provides meaningful choice and opportunities for all.





Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond- BC's Representative for Children and Youth

"Reconciliation is a big word: to me it happens in the family..."

"children and families need services in the communities they live in, from people they know."

"This is a good community, there are amazing people in this community, even just in this room who inspire me so much. People here [at Ray-Cam] have done so much work, got a childcare going, made sure there were no barriers in that childcare. I know as representative how much they had to push to keep things going in a community where a lot of people said "no, no, no". That's incredible and shows that love and acceptance toward all children."



Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond and Melanie Marks chatting with community members.

Watch Mary Ellen Turpel- Lafond 's full presentation [here](#)

### **TRADITIONAL VS PLACE-BASED APPROACHES**

Traditional approaches tend to be modeled on a one-size fits all scale or target one specific issue while excluding other related issues. The tendency to approach service delivery as a series of top-down, competitive, siloed and segregated services is particularly problematic and this happens in all neighbourhoods. Communities are faced with a range of interconnected problems such as inadequate housing, poor health, low incomes, high unemployment, safety issues, poor educational outcomes and lack of access to sports, culture and recreational opportunities. As a result, the systems often fail because they are unable to offer the appropriate combination of programs and services which meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.

Place-based champion Mike Harcourt, former BC premier talks about the importance of the place-based approach. [Watch the video](#)

For more information about the [Healthy City Strategy](#)

### **PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Working in a publically funded community-centred context is effective in addressing the conditions under which challenges and problems occur as well as in dealing with the issues themselves. Place-based strategies which embrace partnerships, research and evaluation are able to support and engage communities more successfully. They respond to their needs in a holistic fashion through the creation of informed planning, action and evaluation.

The continued focus on engaging community members in participatory and leadership roles also builds the capacity of communities to take responsibility and ownership for their own issues over time.





## A Legacy of Empowered Parents in Strathcona: From the Militant Mothers of Raymur to the RayCam Powerful Parents:

In 1971, mothers living at Stamps Place Housing were worried about their children's safety crossing the railway tracks on their way to Seymour School. The Canadian Pacific Railway promised the mothers the train would not run during the times the kids went to and from school. In the end, the train company broke this promise!

In an incredible act of direct action, mothers and their children set up tents on the railway tracks effectively blocking rail traffic to the Port of Vancouver. A few mothers even risked arrest and went to jail for a short time and the story was covered in the Vancouver Sun. Finally, the mothers won their fight and an overpass was built so the kids could walk safely to school. It is thanks to the bravery of these mothers that we have the overpass.

The courageous acts of the Raymur mothers continue to be celebrated in the city by Alexander Varty on October 22<sup>nd</sup> for the Georgia Straight.

Today, parent leadership in the community remains strong and discriminatory policies and practises do not go unchallenged. For example, in early 2011 a group of mothers with young children, frustrated by the barriers that were limiting their access to the basic resources they needed to adequately provide for their families, began to meet at a trusted local community centre. Determined to have their voices heard and to bring about positive changes for themselves and families in similar situations, they enlisted the help of two community resource workers. With these necessary supports, they began brainstorming ways to champion the interests of inner city children and families. Out of this process, they developed the seed of an innovative peer support and mentorship program, "Powerful Parents". Supported by a successful grant application, they have now implemented a training program to improve their leadership and parenting skills.



Centre photo - City of Vancouver's Ali Grant, author of Healthy City for All

## THE NEED FOR POLICY CHANGES

Place-based strategies offer comprehensive, holistic, and integrated solutions that can meet both individual and broader community needs. It is important to stress that working in a place-based way does not replace the need to change broader public policies and systems in order to address the roots of pervasive problems such as inequality. Social and economic exclusion are realities that



challenge all communities; the scope of place-based approaches require multiple levels of intervention. This is why we hope to share our research and findings with policy makers in creating change on all levels.

## OUR PLACE: WHO WE ARE

### OUR PLACE

We are a group of people who believe in the place-based model, a model that has worked well in places like Australia and the USA. We represent all sectors of the community: local government, private sector, health, public schools, artists, social justice advocates, faith groups, unions, foundations, and residents. What brings us together is a common goal of working together to create meaningful and informed choices with our community. We are building on the legacy of those who have paved the way before us to ensure our children and families take their rightful place in all aspects of our community.

**OUR PLACE** consists of an integrated network, as noted above, all committed to coordinating efforts through a place-based strategy. We are Elders, youth, single parents, students, immigrants, refugees, Indigenous/Non-Indigenous citizens who live, work and play in our community. OUR PLACE was created as a response to address issues being faced by inner city residents including pervasive social exclusion, impoverishment and poor health indicators.

**OUR PLACE** advocates the application of a place-based methodology to all areas of the community including Children & Youth, Families, Elders, Health, Social Justice and Economic Well-Being. Partners of OUR PLACE work collectively to establish goals, develop mechanisms to hear and act upon community feedback, collaborate on projects and coordinate existing resources to ensure that community-based services are connected, responsive, reflective and sustainable. Through this strategic approach we have a proactive approach to community development and seek what is needed to meet the strategy.

For more about Our Place watch [this video](#)

PRIMARY AGENCIES OF OUR PLACE:

[ALIVE](#)

[NICCSS](#)

[RayCam](#)



Centre left- Kellie Carroll coordinator of NICCSS





## Initiatives under development that support the OUR PLACE Collective Impact Approach

MoreSports was developed in Vancouver's Eastside in response to the barriers of many local children to participate in after-school/weekend organized sport and recreation leagues, and skill development programs, due to issues such as financial constraints and language concerns. The strategy was designed with the understanding that it would need to build on existing strengths in communities, fostering social inclusion and developing the capacity to deliver a multitude of sport and skill development activities for local children and youth.

The model is simple: go where children are, provide structures and programming that fit with what children and families actually want, and build on what already exists. The approach taken is unique in two regards:

- First, barriers to participation are not only removed but are rendered invisible. All participants access activities and programs through a common, indistinguishable, pay-what-you-can entry process
- Second, programs and activities are built on and integrated within existing community and school structures and systems, thus maximizing participation and minimizing costs while effectively reflecting neighbourhood capacities and priorities

Youth Engaged Learn Lead (YELL) The other key participants in the MoreSports system are the several hundred youth each year who register to receive training through YELL coordinated system of training that uses existing community resources to develop youth volunteers, coaches and leaders.

YELL serves multiple purposes:

- Engages community youth who are marginalized
- Provides these youth with volunteer opportunities, which are mandatory for secondary school graduation
- Builds community capacity by training individuals FROM the community FOR the community

YELL also developed a community stream engaging and training youth leaders who face systemic barriers to actively engage sports or recreation activities; focusing on these youth we are able to work with other programs and services and streamline them to become leaders and role models for other children in our community.

reBOOT a social enterprise recycling and refurbishing donated computers, and making them available to all residents at low cost.

The Graduation Strategy which aims to see all local children and youth graduate and move into gainful employment.

Our Place Our Children, a model that places children at the centre of child protection and family issues. Here is a [short video](#) made with one of the youth.



Responsible Indigenous Strategy for Empowerment (RISE), a newly created strategy building on existing child and youth leadership development work with Aboriginal youth (Gen7 Aboriginal Youth Role Model Program <http://www.alivesociety.ca/alive-projects/12-alive-and-partners-launch-the-gen7-aboriginal-youth-role-model-program>). Aboriginal youth are trained as leaders and mentors and work to support the inclusion of Aboriginal children and families in local Parks Board community centres

The Inner City Economic Strategy (ICES) provides opportunities for local individuals to successfully enter or re-enter the work force.

Watch Bob Ransford from Wall Development discussing community economic development

The DTES Local Area Plan which was passed by the City of Vancouver supports the creation of the Salish Sea Civilization, a place to learn and share as part of the reconciliation process.





Responsive Intersectoral-Interdisciplinary, Child-Community, Health, Education and Research ([RICHER](#)) a social paediatrics partnership initiative, designed to foster timely access to healthcare for a community of inner city children who have disproportionately high rates of developmental vulnerability. The initiative has effectively adapted health services delivery to provide care in ways that are accessible and responsive to the needs of the community.

[Dr Zhung Vo from BC Children's Hospital on the importance of place-based strategies](#)



[The Vancouver Rent Bank \(VRB\)](#) a response to the ongoing impoverishment faced by many in our community. As a result, families find themselves in stressful situations where they are unable to pay rent, often having to choose between food, rent, bills or face eviction. The VRB enables qualified people a choice which they had not had before and often creates a cushion between the landlord and tenant, thus reducing the level of threat between becoming homeless and in too many cases having Ministry of Child and Families Development (MCFD) threaten to take their children into care. The initiative was immensely successful, despite the modest financial contribution that initially sustained the program. Responding to this success, the Streethome Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver, and Vancity Credit Union partnered with the community under the umbrella of the Network of Inner City Community Services (NICCSS) to make the program available city-wide.



Inner City Digital Access Committee Based on the collective interest of making free/low cost internet available to residents of the inner city, a number of organizations have joined together to form a place-based community Wi-Fi partnership. While there are many programs and organizations offering Wi-Fi service, computer access and training in public spaces, the 'piecemeal' approach has not made a significant impact in creating equity for the many low-income residents, nor has it been effective in closing the digital divide. Vancouver's most vulnerable populations, be it immigrants, refugees, low income families and urban Aboriginal residents in the city are the target beneficiaries of several Digital Home Access Projects that will be initiated through the Community Wi-Fi Committee. Bridging the digital divide by providing accessible broadband internet has the potential to transform this area through improved academic results at schools, increased access to opportunities including scholarships, training, employment and community economic development advanced by a more informed and empowered population.

Ultimately, the goal of OUR PLACE is to inspire the community to work together, alongside strong local leadership, connecting to common interests in order to create local evidence-based solutions. The outcome is to develop a community-based, continuum of quality services, good-practice approaches and opportunities to assistance that are seamless and accessible; at the core of the Collective Impact Place-Based approach exists a prenatal to post-secondary strategy where the needs of all vulnerable children and families are met. Strategies are evaluated and accountable to the communities shared values and high standards, which improve the lives of all who live and work in the OUR PLACE neighbourhood.





Andrea Reimer, City Of Vancouver Councilor

"We're finding new ways forward, and this is where the work of Our Place has come to be an inspiration for the work we need to do as a city"

"At a city-wide level, this work will be done when every single Aboriginal child can walk into school on the first day and believe, and have their parents and community believe she has absolutely every opportunity and every right to achieve the possibility that every other child in that school does"

Watch Andrea Reimer's full presentation [here](#)

Learn more about the following city of Vancouver initiatives mentioned by councillor Reimer in her address at Reconciliation in Action:

[City of Vancouver Motion creating Year of reconciliation and adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#)

[Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study--Vancouver by the Environics Institute](#)

[Framework for City of Reconciliation](#)

[Staff Presentation](#)

[Video of Presentation](#)

[DTES Local Area Plan](#)

[Healthy City Strategy](#)

[First Nations, Urban Aboriginal, Immigrant Dialogue Series](#)





## OUR PLACE: HOW WE GOT HERE

### SUCCEED IN STRATHCONA

In 2001, the University of British Columbia's Early Learning Partnership began researching into early childhood development throughout the province. By mid-decade, the data painted a stark picture of the realities faced by inner city children. By every measure calculated – Physical, Social, Emotional, Language, and Communication - 72% of Strathcona children were vulnerable in at least one of the measured areas. Statistics indicated they were not only the most vulnerable in the Metropolitan Vancouver, but also province-wide.

Local inner city children faced a daunting combination of complex problems. Lack of access to primary health care and food security, daily exposure to criminal activity, homelessness, drug abuse, domestic violence and social disorder. Conditions culminated into high push-out rates from schools, inability to achieve economic security in their later years, failure to meet crucial development milestones and achieve the success levels of their peers in other neighbourhoods. Saddening results, but not surprising considering the conditions.

Driven to see their children prevail, local families and workers set out developing a local, place-based strategy inspired by models like Harlem Children's Zone Project. [Harlem Children's Zone](#) was a multi-faceted initiative launched in New York City focusing on a 100-block area in Central Harlem. Its goal was to foster the healthy development of over 7,400 children, from infancy to adulthood, by weaving a tight social safety and education net. The Vancouver rendition, dubbed Succeed in Strathcona, set a goal of achieving educational success for all local children. Strategic elements included:

Ultimately, the achievements and legacy of Succeed in Strathcona enormously impacted the neighbourhood. The vast majority of Strathcona children are now being evaluated for physical and developmental challenges prior to entering the school system and earlier diagnosis has led to timely interventions and better outcomes. The latest research results have shown that there has been an increase of 25% in the Strathcona children's school readiness. Children and families now receive regular health care, many for the first time. Children are better supported to take advantage of early learning opportunities, while many parents have increased personal capacities, parenting skills, and in many cases have been moving into paid employment. Our Place seeks to build upon these successes.

[Vancouver School Board motion adopting the place based approach](#)





## INTRODUCING A NEW PARADIGM: DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

Resistance to new approaches is common, even if they are evidence-based. Notwithstanding good intentions, foundations and government (all levels including Land-Based First Nations), Indigenous/ Non Indigenous social and economic agencies – particularly those with regional or provincial focus – simply do not know the local residents or community groups in a neighbourhood. Thus, the development and delivery of their programs or services are generalized and often organized in a manner of convenience for their contract delivery system. While they may garner results, these programs often fail to achieve their full potential as other related-problems conflicts with their efficacy. Also, residents who could benefit from these programs remain excluded by criteria based on organizational perceptions, not resident realities. Long-term sustainability is rare, and it's worth re-emphasizing that children and family grow up in communities, not programs. Far too often when the program funding has ended, so does this "programmed community."

Meaningful place-based responses require a new way of thinking and acting. It is not just a matter of being in a community or redirecting money --it means responding in a manner that is community specific, strategically encompassing all related complexities faced by that community and fostering sustainable community capacity. Above all, it places the realities and priorities of local residents at the centre of the response and adapts organizational operations to re-align the unorganized community system into a resident/community organized system, using evidence based results to guide ongoing development to meet the ever changing dynamics that impact community development. No one level of government or agency is capable of addressing the myriad of issues impacting the diverse elements of any community.







Chandra at Reconciliation in Action - 2014

## USING EXISTING RESOURCES MORE CREATIVELY

The collective impact place-based strategy used by Our Place is not financed by any level of government or foundation at this time. The majority of this work is carried out by the dedicated leaders of the partner agencies who believe in shifting the current approach. Notwithstanding, the challenges this brings, the partner agencies who have contracts with governments (including First Nations) or foundations meet weekly and dovetail their existing programs and services to create a seamless delivery system supporting all vulnerable children and families. This enables Our Place to identify emerging needs and strategically develop a collaborative approach to fill these needs with existing or new partners.

Ray-Cam Co-Operative Centre is a Vancouver Parks Board publically funded agency and acts as the hub for the partner agencies where over 50% of the programs are delivered from social service agencies (Indigenous/Non Indigenous) from the area. While each agency must report back to their contractor under their existing siloed or segregated contracts, we are able to tweak the programs to meet the needs of residents and the non-profit is able to report back to their funder.

"Schools are the heart-beats of the community" and "community centres are the living rooms" are oft heard expressions. The place-based approach closely ties together these two existing publically funded institutions to build fiscal, technological, and human sustainable capacities with community residents and friends.





## A RECAP: GOALS OF THE PLACE-BASED APPROACH

Increase citizen connectedness by building social inclusion as a means to enhancing safety and well being amongst marginalized communities. Creating opportunities to establish relationships of trust among residents, and between residents, and neighbourhood institutions, is critical to building healthy places. Indigenous, immigrant, refugee and low income populations face systemic barriers and therefore developing solutions, such as recruiting residents, training, employing, volunteering, and cultural reflective practices are means to enhance inclusion.

Build upon and connect existing community supports services to partner with local agencies, such as schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses that are already well-established and trusted in the area. Rather than working in silos and creating programs and services that are redundant and unconnected (like the traditional approach). They need to work collaboratively to compliment, extend and enrich existing programs and services into a strategy that can be measured and adapted to meet community needs.

Increase the capacity for citizens to navigate systems, access resources and lobby for themselves. Community capacity is defined as the social and material resources that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve the well-being of a given community. Individuals and organizations with credibility and knowledge of local conditions are critical to developing new connections and championing the goals and interests of the community. When leaders emerge within a community, their status as peers enables them to serve as knowledgeable role models for other community residents.

Engage the community in planning and developing mechanisms, which prioritize community input. Place-based provide opportunities for citizens to have a real voice on issues, policies and services that affect them. Strategies should feature mechanisms that respond to community concerns, needs and aspirations. Policy-makers and service providers must collaborate together to gather community input, feedback and evaluation.

A healthy city is achieved when it is made up of healthy places, people and policies.

When citizens see that they can influence their daily social reality and environment, they are more likely to commit their energy to its enhancement. Residents, organizations and businesses can achieve collective impact and support positive change. By working together, they can bring new waves of creativity, thinking and energy to transform the negative variables of their place into one that thrives.

Developing a true place-based strategy involves listening, learning, critical self-examination and a willingness to change. It means making a real commitment to placing the priorities of a community above all else.





Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre President Marilyn McKee





Thank you to all our partners, funders and collaborators that helped to make Reconciliation in Action: Where Change Happens a reality.





Presentation to the Board of Trustees

April 14<sup>th</sup> 2015

RE: the proposed closing of the Hastings & Downtown East Adult Education Centers

With respect to the Charitable Members of the Board of Trustees:

Regrettably, I am not able to attend your public forum. I had the opportunity to pick up a shift at work tonight, and as a father of a beautiful daughter, personal economics are always at the forefront.

My perspective is that the Downtown Eastside Education Center is the last adult education facility that should be closed. To me personally it was and is a beacon of hope. I was living in a hotel on Powell Street. All of the other lodgers were drug users; poor souls who had have given up. I must make it clear that I do not use, nor have I ever used illegal narcotics. Bewildered by my circumstances, I went for an English and math assessment. Encouraged by the results, I enrolled in both math and English courses at the Hastings Adult Education facility. I am now accepted into the associate of chemistry program at Langara College. Upon completion of that, I plan to enter year three of the Bachelor of Science in chemistry curriculum at the University of British Columbia.

Fundamentally, I believe that the majority of any funding should be delegated to our youth for they are our future. However, the secondary concern should be citizens of low economic status. People of considerable wealth do not face the same obstacles that residents of the downtown eastside do. It is with this firsthand knowledge that I implore you to realign the education budget so that the Downtown Eastside School can remain operational.

As I mentioned, it has been a beacon of hope for me. My involvement with the staff at both Hastings and DEEC has yielded a path to higher education. In particular, the efforts of Laura Pasut have been instrumental in my path to success. By achieving my educational goal, I will be able to provide opportunity for my child. In that way, I will be doing my small part to encourage a safe, secure and prosperous future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Daryl Branston



My name is Arthur Trigg, I am a senior Citizen, 65 years young. Because of my income I have very little choice of where I can live.

Living in a low income area there is not many things I can boast about except for the Downtown East Education Centre, which has operated for more than twenty years. I am proud to say I attend there, and grateful for being able to find out the facts, about any information I may have heard about. Not all information is good news, some news saddens me, for example, I just found out, about the Government's plans to shut the Centre down. It will surely look like a ghost-town around here. The brightest light will shine no more, it will, look, like total darkness. To the people like me, who live here.

I can't think of anything else that can compare. The only thing I can think of is a light switch, when you turn off the light switch, you have darkness, emptiness, void. The Downtown Eastside Education Centre will give its light. The empty building will blend in with the darkness of the Downtown Eastside.



To whom it may concern

April, 13/2015

Hello, my name is Emma Price. I am writing this letter, because I found out that the Government is going to close down the Downtown East Side Education Centre (DEEC).

For some people it takes a lot of time for them to decide to go back to school, and get their grade twelve education.

I am one of these people, it took me many years, because I am very shy and have low self esteem. When I first

came in to the learning centre, I had to do an assessment, I was very stressed and overwhelmed.

The teachers, and outreach worker helped me to focus and get through the assessment. This is the reason

I am at Downtown East Side Education Centre

working to get my grade twelve. The teachers are

very experienced at helping the students get through

their school work. We need these teachers and this

school. Myself and other people want to graduate so

that we could be contributing workers of Vancouver B.C..

Pr. Emma Price



## Letter Regarding Closure of DEEC

**By Stewart Wiensz**

I've been attending the Downtown Eastside (Adult) Education Centre for approximately one year now. During this time, I have completed my Communications 11, English 11 and at the present time, I'm taking my Foundations Math 3, 4, 5, and 6 courses. The Downtown Eastside Adult Learning Centre location is convenient for me as I do live close by the centre. By closing this centre, getting an education will be difficult not only for myself, but also for many people who live in the DTES. Many people who live here are on income assistance and can't afford bus passes. Therefore, they won't be able to continue their education if the downtown East Education Centre closes down. I am kindly asking the B.C. government and the Vancouver School Board to reconsider their proposal to close the Downtown Eastside (Adult) Education Centre. This place has done so much for me in the past and present, and also other students as well. By closing this centre, myself and other students will lose the opportunity to finish our education.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stewart Wiensz". The signature is written in dark ink and is located in the lower right portion of the page.



APRIL 13, 2015

TO: VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD  
RE: SCHOOL CLOSURE ON POWELL ST.  
DEAR: BOARD MEMBERS

I AM VERY SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED TO HEAR THAT YOU ARE PLANNING ON CLOSING THE ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE AT 103 POWELL ST. THE COURSES OFFERED IN THIS SCHOOL ARE POSITIVE GAME CHANGERS FOR SO MANY STRUGGLING LESS FORTUNATE PEOPLE. THIS LOCATION AT COLUMBIA<sup>ST</sup> AND POWELL ST. IS PERFECTLY SITUATED ON THE BORDERLINE OF GASTOWN AND THE DTES. THIS SCHOOL IS LIKE A SYMBOLIC GATEWAY OUT OF THE "HOOD".

I HAVE BEEN IN THE SCHOOL ON A COUPLE OF OCCASSIONS TO INQUIRE ABOUT FREE COURSES AVAILABCE AND FELT GENUINE ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMPASSION FROM LAURA, A SOCIAL WORKER AT THE CENTRE. STUDENTS I'VE SPOKEN TO ATTENDING CLASSES THERE HAVE REPORTED REAL PROGRESS IN ADVANCING THEIR EDUCATION, AND TRIBUTE THEIR SUCCESS TO THE QUALITY TEACHERS.

I AM WANTING TO TAKE THE COMPUTER COURSE BUT UNFORTUNATELY A FAMILY CRISIS WILL REQUIRE ME TO BE OUT OF TOWN FOR TOO MUCH OF THIS UPCOMING SEMESTER.

THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN A BRIGHT LIGHT IN A DARK AREA AND WOULD BE ASHAME TO LOSE.

I SINCERELY HOPE THE VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD WILL RECONSIDER ITS POOR JUDGEMENT AND CONTINUE THE CENTRE'S VALUABLE SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

Signed: CONCERNED CITIZEN &  
FUTURE STUDENT.

I. JAMES DICKINSON



**Jaquelin A. Najera Granados.**

**As an immigrant and permanent resident to Canada I was thrilled to learn that I could take English and other secondary level courses upon arrival in Canada. For a new immigrant to this country who has some knowledge of English but wanted to upgrade my skills to improve my position in the workforce I was excited about this opportunity to study English at the Vancouver School Board. And I am just one of hundreds maybe thousands of other immigrants in the same position. But now the provincial government wants to deny myself and thousands of future immigrants to this country this huge chance to improve our standing as a worker or student in this province and country. The government should focus on how to increase and improve the education system at every possibility, not take away opportunities. Education is a right that we as a people should promote and I call on the BC government to reverse this attack on the province's immigrants and their right to a free education.**







5288 Joyce Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5R 6C9 | 604-435-0323 | info@cnh.bc.ca | www.cnh.bc.ca

Christopher Richardson, Chair  
Vancouver School Board  
1580 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC, Canada V6J 5K8

April 14, 2015

Dear Mr. Richardson,

I'm writing to you about the proposed elimination of the alternate, self-paced, high school program for youth that's located at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH).

This program has been in place since 2002. CNH has never charged the VSB for use of a program room (used as the main classroom), staff break room (used for art and group projects), computer lab, gym and kitchen. The VSB's only cost has been teacher salaries.

The benefits to local students and the neighbourhood have been welcome and they have been substantial. Over the years we have seen students arrive, get oriented to the program and then start to get engaged in our neighbourhood house and in our neighbourhood.

Food is such a great way to attract youth and, over the years, many of the students have volunteered with our twice weekly Community Lunch program. They get their Food Safe certification and many have gone on to get jobs in the food industry.

It's deeply touching to see the relationships they build with others. In one case somebody snapped a touching photo of one of the students gently helping another volunteer (who is developmentally disabled) with her safety gloves. We loved that photo so much we included it in our 2012-13 annual report. Please see the enclosed copy.

CNH is conveniently located for youth access: we are near Joyce-Collingwood SkyTrain station, have a bus stop out front on Joyce Street and are minutes from Kingsway.

Renfrew-Collingwood has more youth (aged 13-24) than any other Vancouver neighbourhood. The average income and education levels are below the city average and 74 percent of our population speaks English as a second language. How odd that the VSB would pull this program from an area of Vancouver with such high vulnerabilities.

/2

Sadly, it is not the only neighbourhood program the VSB is proposing to cut: the draft plan also calls for the ending of the English-language class for parents and caregivers at Renfrew Elementary School. We respectfully ask you to reconsider the cuts to these programs and restore these valuable neighbourhood assets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julie Linkletter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Julie Linkletter, President, Collingwood Neighbourhood House Board of Directors



## Board of Directors 2012 – 2013

Julie Linkletter  
President

Jean Kavanagh  
1st Vice President

Patricio Ibarra  
2nd Vice President

Rafael (RJ) Aquino  
Secretary

Kenny Diebel  
Treasurer

Oscar Allueva

Joshua  
Hergesheimer

Paula Lindner

Muriel Ann Rivard

Abigail Pelaez

Cassandra Ly

Rico Wen

## Staff Directors Team

Jennifer Gray-Grant  
Executive Director

Kulwant Kaur  
Director of Operations

Michael McLenaghan  
Director of  
Community Services

Sharon Gregson  
Director of Child & Family  
Development Services

January Wolodarsky  
Director of  
Community Development

Paula Carr  
Community Strategist for  
Renfrew-Collingwood  
Intercultural Development

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## President's & Executive Director's Report

We grew and we also reduced at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) this year. Let us explain.

Earlier this month, we officially opened the new Terry Tayler Early Learning and Care Centre. Named for CNH's founding president the new centre adds 37 childcare spaces to Renfrew-Collingwood. CNH also opened a school-age program at Renfrew Elementary School and, this September, will boost the number of spaces at Norquay Elementary from 30 to 58 spaces.

While childcare spaces grew CNH saw a reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions, thanks to staff participation in the Climate Smart Program which helps organizations to reduce their carbon footprint. Through both the installation of power-smart fixtures and staff behaviour changes CNH has reduced its electrical usage by about 25 percent! It has also boosted recycling and composting efforts. Climate Smart acknowledged that impressive accomplishment with an article in its publication.

CNH also received province-wide recognition with a Nesika Award from the Multicultural Advisory Committee, facilitated through EmbraceBC. The award acknowledged CNH for excellence in cultural diversity. Julie was thrilled to collect the award on behalf of CNH. Meanwhile CNH's Family Place also won a provincial award from the BC Association of Family Resource Programs.

The new buildings, our decreased energy use and the acknowledgements and awards are wonderful but they don't tell CNH's full story. That comes from our participants and volunteers – the children, parents, adults, seniors and families who come to our Monday evening Families Branching Out program, attend our twice-weekly Community Lunch, get fit through our recreation programs, or for 10 years now

have participated in the neighbourhood-focused Collingwood Days, for example.

CNH is a place where strangers become neighbours and where every person makes a difference. This year we were reminded of that when we said good-bye to our longest-serving volunteer, Albert Battistoni. For more than 20 years Albert greeted everybody who walked through our door, seven days a week. At his Celebration of Life, held at CNH, people of all ages spoke and wrote about the difference he'd made in their lives.

The outpouring of affection for Albert reminded us of how much we appreciate CNH's staff and volunteers. Staff work extremely hard and we sincerely appreciate their dedication to ensuring that our participants feel welcome and that our neighbourhood is so engaging and vibrant. Thanks as well to our hundreds of volunteers – including our Board of Directors – who carry out so much of the work of this organization simply because they are passionate about this place and this neighbourhood. Thank you to our staff and our volunteers. Every one of you is making a difference in lives you may never know you touched.

*Julie Linkletter*

Julie Linkletter  
President

*J. Gray-Grant*

Jennifer Gray-Grant  
Executive Director

## Statement of Operations, Revenue & Expenses Year ended March 31, 2013

Revenue \$4,988,311		Expenses \$4,975,211	
47.1%	\$2,349,098 Grants	74.3%	\$3,698,619 Salaries and benefits
41.8%	\$2,085,323 Program fees		
2.8%	\$139,479 Facilities rental	9.7%	\$484,379 Contracted services
2.0%	\$99,708 Other	5.4%	\$271,663 Program expenses, publicity and translation
1.6%	\$83,216 Endowment income	3.2%	\$156,933 Rent, telephone and utilities
1.5%	\$75,700 Gaming	2.0%	\$97,462 Amortization of capital assets
1.2%	\$58,206 Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	1.5%	\$73,562 Office expenses and supplies
1.1%	\$53,876 Donations and fundraising	1.3%	\$64,440 Honoraria and volunteer support
0.6%	\$29,764 Consulting	0.8%	\$38,315 Repairs and maintenance
0.3%	\$13,941 Interest	0.6%	\$27,880 Travel
		0.5%	\$26,307 Insurance
		0.3%	\$17,090 Training
		0.1%	\$6,752 Membership dues
		0.1%	\$4,861 Automobile
		0.1%	\$4,241 Bank charges and other
		0.1%	\$2,707 Bad debts

## Excess of revenue over expenses for the year: \$13,100

A full audited financial statement is available on our website, [www.cnh.bc.ca](http://www.cnh.bc.ca). Click on "Annual Report" on the home page.



## Mission

To promote the well being of the Collingwood community by providing leadership and working collaboratively with individuals, families, agencies and other groups to develop and support inclusive, innovative, sustainable initiatives and services that respond to the community's social, educational, economic, health, cultural and recreational needs.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House is a registered charity (#118868298RR0001).



# Changing Lives

Here are just three of the many lives we touched this year

2012 – 2013



## Patrick

Patrick Painter was trudging home after work one dark, cold, rain-sodden, January evening when a stream of light and a whisper of music turned his tired eyes towards an open door. He approached the door and poked his head inside.

"I saw people living," he said. "They were dancing to music. They were experiencing the joy that life promises but so rarely delivers. I was astonished."

It's been five months since Patrick entered that open door at *Collingwood Neighbourhood House*. He said he goes dancing there as often as he can because of the shared joy that awaits him. "What enlivens me most are the wordless connections that have formed between people whose cultural backgrounds and native tongues are so dramatically different," he said. "The chorus of hoots and hollers, the blurred movements of twirls, slides, jives, and jumps – this is our shared language. It is a glimmer of togetherness in a city shrouded by the malaise of disunity. It is the armour that protects us from the lie that our value can be reduced to a GDP statistic. Dancing at *Collingwood Neighbourhood House* catapults people from a lonely plane of existence into the rich sea of life."



## Liam

I'm going to Kindergarten so I will not see all of you everyday anymore. But I want you to know I had so much fun and had so many firsts with all of you! My first field trip, first Christmas concert, first taste of new foods, first friends and teachers, first class picture and my first graduation! It has been a great experience.

Even though I'm not very good at saying good-bye in the morning, I never want to leave at 5 pm because I had so much fun. I will miss giving my teachers a hug at the end of a school day.

Thank you for playing with me, teaching me, reading to me and just everything. I will miss you all. I will come to visit often. I will eventually come and pick up my little brother Adam from Duke very soon! See You Again!

(Liam attended CNH's Duke Street Early Learning and Care Centre.)

## Quin Yan

Quin Yan made a mistake and it opened her life. After having lived in Canada for three years, Quin Yan started studying English in a class at Renfrew Library. One day she entered the room to find it filled with people who were painting and embroidering cloth. She had inadvertently stumbled into a *Collingwood Neighbourhood House* (CNH) project called "On The Table" involving community members and local seniors who were using story-telling and various artistic techniques to create table cloths.

She was confused, until the artist-teacher Yoko Tomita welcomed Quin Yan and invited her to stay and participate. Quin Yan, who loves to knit and sew, enjoyed the experience of learning Sashiko, a Japanese embroidery technique. She met another participant, Grace, who speaks Mandarin as well and the two became friends, one of her first friends in Canada.

Quin Yan came back for the next sessions, bringing her husband Lambert, and made more friends. "People said it's hard to make friends in Canada," Lambert translated for Quin Yan. "But I said 'no; if you join these kinds of actions you learn and you make friends.'"

"This project changed her idea about life," Lambert said, translating how Quin Yan reflected on her experience with the project. Now she believes that "life is to be enjoyed, she can be happy."



For the more detailed version of our annual report please visit our website, [www.cnh.bc.ca](http://www.cnh.bc.ca). Click on "Annual Report" on the home page.



The Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia (CMEBC) stands firmly against the proposed cut to the Vancouver School Board's Elementary Band and Strings Program of 3.8 FTE, unless this reduction implies that the Elementary Band and Strings Program will be restructured to create a model that retains the high quality band and strings program as well as cultivates a better general music education program at the elementary school level.

When faced with no other alternative, it is always better to reduce rather than eliminate programs, and we appreciate the effort of the VSB to sustain the Elementary Band and Strings Program as much as possible. If the budget passes as proposed, and funding for the 3.8 FTE cannot be secured, we are hopeful that the reduction in staff time from the program's current model will create opportunities that will actually strengthen elementary music education in the VSB.

Each time the VSB has placed music on the chopping block, there has been an outcry in support of music education from a tremendous number of stakeholders. There is simply no denying that music education is valued and essential. The February, 2015 consultant's report concerning music in the VSB documented this support and presented hard data and facts as to why music education must be preserved and strengthened. As the CMEBC recommended in our March, 2015 response to the VSB, the district needs to take leadership over their policy for arts education if music is to be taught effectively. District leadership that outlines requirements and expectations for the music program in every school is necessary. Short of leadership at the provincial level that mandates music taught by specialist teachers in every school, the next best thing is for leadership at the district level.

The CMEBC urges the VSB to use the proposed cut of 3.8 FTE in a meaningful way. The music specialist teachers comprising this 3.8 FTE are incredibly qualified, outstanding educators. It would be a tremendous loss to the district to reduce their teaching time or to lose any of these teachers. As music specialists, these teachers are qualified to teach elementary general music in addition to band or strings. This is a perfect opportunity to place a K-5 music specialist teacher in a greater number of elementary schools, staffed by prep time. If scheduled carefully and creatively, it would be possible for these teachers to teach band and strings in addition to elementary music.

We encourage the VSB to explore the prep time strategy suggested in the 2015-2016 budget proposal and work towards having a music specialist teacher in every elementary school. There is no substitute for music specialists. They are recognized by the BCTF and they are the ones with the pedagogical knowledge needed to implement the BC music curriculum. Generalist teachers are not qualified to teach music. Based on the data collected from VSB administrators in the February 2015 consultant's report, it is clear that music education is far from consistent and equitable across the VSB. Some schools have music specialists while others don't. Some have a band or strings program while others don't. It is also clear that when compared to many other Greater Vancouver school districts, the VSB is not meeting the mark for music education.

In our March, 2015 response to the VSB, the CMEBC suggested a three-phase, five-year plan that moves towards K-5 general music (including choir) and grades 6-7 band



or grades 5-7 strings in every elementary school. The end goal is at least one music specialist teacher in every school and a comprehensive music program for all grade levels. With the appropriate leadership and commitment to music education, the VSB can accomplish this. It is time now to make the decision to get this work done. Simply cutting 3.8 FTE to balance the budget then abandoning the greater issue of music education in the district is regressive. There is an opportunity at stake here and we hope the VSB will give this opportunity the time and care necessary for the best interest of students.

The students of the VSB do not deserve nor can they afford any cuts to their music education. Music is not an expendable area of study. The CMEBC recommends that the VSB takes action with the big picture in mind, considering long-term impacts of cutting music in the district. I will close with a quote I've shared before, from a university music student when asked his opinion on the VSB's proposed music cuts: "Through any type of adversity, people naturally turn to music to express themselves. To remove music because of adversity is backwards."



**Vancouver School Board 2015/16 Preliminary Budget Proposals Public Consultation:**  
**Submission of Queen Mary Elementary School PAC**  
**April 11, 2015**

The Queen Mary Elementary School PAC opposes the changes to the Band and Strings Program as proposed in the Preliminary Budget Proposal 2015/2016. The proposal, in our view is not sustainable, provides a water down version of our existing program, is not necessary to achieve the funding required and does not seem to hear what stakeholders, parents and users were communicating through the consultant Valerie Overgaard.

Dr. Overgaard, who was hired by the VSB to look at the sustainability of the Vancouver Band and Strings Program, spent approximately 9 months putting together information for senior management of the VSB. We actively participated whenever asked in all consultations with Dr. Overgaard, teachers and administrators over the elimination of funding for the elementary band and strings program.

Dr. Overgaard's report was presented in February 2015 and within a very short time a "solution" is being considered. In our view, the report presented does not fully reflect what parents supported with respect to Band and Strings and not enough time has been given to discuss the result and come up with a sustainable solutions before this budget proposal. Given that the savings is less than 1% of the VSB budget and impacts the future of a program that could lead to the beginning of the end, we appeal to the VSB to spend some additional time to come up with a solution that maintains the existing program and looks to enhancing music education in those schools who wish to add it to their programs. The parents are willing to help you in this regard if you could share with us additional information.

For over thirty-five years, the VSB Band and Strings Program has been one of the most successful music programs offered in the BC public education system and we would like to find a way to sustain it as is because reducing it with thoughts that additional funding will come in the future is unrealistic in today's education system. We need to find a way to at least sustain what we have and to be creative as to how we can broaden it in the future.

Moving to a Prep Model was not a solution that was supported by our parents. We believe that it will result in a much more watered down version of what is an excellent music program. Adding a Prep model to schools who do not have a music program, provided the school can support it with instructors who have a music education, may be beneficial to those students however not all students have the cognitive ability to play all instruments or even want to play an instrument but can still benefit from having their peers playing for them.

Reducing the FTE but maintaining the same number, or possible more schools in the program is going to make the logistics for teachers trying to support these program impossible. We have been very lucky in the VSB to have a highly skilled group of teachers supporting the existing music program but we may lose them due to other job offers or burn out due to the additional strain this reduced program will put onto their daily schedules.

Increasing the user fee of \$2.50 per month to \$5.00 per month does not reflect what parents are saying with respect the user fees. We encourage a more substantial increase in user fees (example \$25/month) provided any child with financial hardship can still participate in the program through a bursary or some other similar program made available through a variety of source. Many people spend \$5.00 on a coffee and would not object to a higher user fee. Parents have also provided information on how a bursary fund could be created for this program for those in need.

We calculate that if we maintain the current program with approximately 2,800 students and if we assume 70% of these students are able to pay a user fee of \$25 (\$20) per month then the program could generate revenue of \$490,000 (\$392,000) which more than covers the savings needed leaving more funding available to provide some additional options to other schools. Violin lessons cost anywhere from \$40 to \$100 per hour which is significantly higher than what it would cost to have our children taught string at school with their peers.

In many cases the band and strings program offered through the schools is the only access many of our children have to formal music instruction so we would want to ensure a system is put in place so that all who want to participate can and those who do not want to are not forced to.

For all these reasons, we ask the VSB to reconsider its proposal to reduce the funding at this time and to spend a more deserving amount of time at reviewing the options more carefully before making a decision that we cannot move back from and to consider other cost-saving/revenue generating measures as an alternative.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Queen Mary Elementary Parents Advisory Council



## **Letter Regarding Closure of DEEC**

**By Stewart Wiensz**

I've been attending the Downtown Eastside (Adult) Education Centre for approximately one year now. During this time, I have completed my Communications 11, English 11 and at the present time, I'm taking my Foundations Math 3, 4, 5, and 6 courses. The Downtown Eastside Adult Learning Centre location is convenient for me as I do live close by the centre. By closing this centre, getting an education will be difficult not only for myself, but also for many people who live in the DTES. Many people who live here are on income assistance and can't afford bus passes. Therefore, they won't be able to continue their education if the downtown East Education Centre closes down. I am kindly asking the B.C. government and the Vancouver School Board to reconsider their proposal to close the Downtown Eastside (Adult) Education Centre. This place has done so much for me in the past and present, and also other students as well. By closing this centre, myself and other students will lose the opportunity to finish our education.