

Communities Invest in

HEALTH PROMOTION

Welcome to the fifth edition of the BCCHP newsletter. In this issue we will update you on the activities of the Coalition and feature articles by our members and supporters.



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Established in June 2000, the BC Coalition for Health Promotion is a group of volunteer citizens dedicated to the advancement of health promotion in BC. Our Core Team members are experienced in participatory research, evaluation, health leadership, community development and funding in the nonprofit sector.

ELSE STRAND RECEIVES BC AWARD



In September, Coalition chairperson Else Strand, received the Canadian Mental Health Association - BC Division Outstanding Volunteer Award. Bev Gutray, Executive Director of CMHA BC Division, said Else was chosen for the award because of her “long-standing volunteer work” at all three levels of the organization.

Else’s achievements are many. She was pivotal in bringing a CMHA branch to the Cowichan Valley in 1990. She served as president of the BC Division’s Board of Directors for two terms, and represented British Columbia on a number of national committees including the home care committee and the Lorne Fraser Educational Fund Bursary Committee.

These volunteer efforts are just a few examples of Else’s many years of dedicated service to others. The BCCHP is proud to have such a skilled and caring person as part of our organization where she has served as Chairperson since 2003.



LIGHTS - CAMERA - ACTION BCCHP STARTS PRODUCTION ON HEALTH INDICATOR DOCUMENTARY

If a picture is 'worth a thousand words' then a movie must be countless. With this in mind, BCCHP is working on an educational documentary to explain the multiple determinants of health. The one-hour film will illustrate the determinants in unique and dramatic ways that are familiar to the Cowichan Valley, yet applicable to the rest of the country. "It doesn't matter what part of the province you live in, all communities are a composite of creative, dynamic and capable people," said Ronnie Phipps Coordinator BCCHP.



Cowichan film maker Tom Shandel will manage the camera illustrating examples of the factors that influence our quality of life – the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and environmental determinants of health. "The objective of the documentary is to connect the determinants with the work of community organizations and hopefully to inform public policy," said Ronnie.

"The central message is that the community knows what the community needs" in terms of health. We want to show through peoples' experiences the vital role that organizations and individuals play in health promotion.

All across Canada, thousands upon thousands of volunteers, non-profit organizations and front-line professionals make major contributions to sustainable futures and health promotion. Their work touches the core of all those factors that influence our quality of life. Yet these groups remain under-funded and under-recognized for the work they do.

The documentary acknowledges their role, explores the successes and challenges of community organizations and pays tribute to their work. It illustrates concrete examples of health promotion in action that apply to communities throughout British Columbia and beyond.

Accompanying the documentary will be a handbook or discussion guide to be used as a resource for those who want to learn more about the role of communities in health promotion. Once completed, the Coalition aims to have the documentary and guide available at presentations, on DVD and via an interactive website.

Partners in this project include Getaway Films Inc., Vancouver Island Providence Community Association (Providence Farm), Municipality of North Cowichan, Social Planning Cowichan and the Public Health Association of BC. Filming has already started and as funds are acquired for the project, the BCCHP plans to have the documentary completed by December 2009.

Well organized and empowered communities are highly effective in determining their own health, and are capable of making governments and the private sector accountable for the health consequences of their policies and practices.

*The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World
World Health Organization (August 2005)*

Ranjana Basu, author, *A Guide for Supporting Caregiving Families: Nourishing strengths and opening hearts*, Coordinator, Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society.

NEW BOOK SUPPORTING CANADIAN CAREGIVERS PART GUIDE, PART REPORT, PART CALL-TO-ARMS

In *A Guide for Supporting Caregiving families: Nourishing strengths and opening hearts*, author Ranjana Basu (pictured right) describes a job with no pay, 24-hour duty, heavy responsibility, isolation, and depression. A job that many Canadians are taking on gladly. The role of family caregiver – caring for family or friends with chronic health conditions or disabilities – saves the Canadian health care system an estimated five billion dollars a year.

The “Guide” describes a new model of support for family caregivers in rural communities, small urban centres, and aboriginal (First Nations) groups in the Cowichan region of Vancouver Island, by the Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society. The book will be of use to groups or individuals providing support for family caregivers. It includes unique information on how support circles can help families caring for elderly members and the effective use of support in a First Nations Community.

There are many reasons why the book was written. One is the hope that it will resonate with people, inspiring action that mobilizes communities to strengthen support for caregiving families. Another reason? “Clearly, supporting the over three million family caregivers in Canada makes economic sense. But we have other motives for working with them: their struggles touch our hearts,” explains Ranjana.



Order Information

Visit: <http://www.familycaregiverssupport.org/>

Email: Info@familycaregiverssupport.org

Phone: 250-743-7621

Write: Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society,
PO Box 13, Shawnigan Lake BC V0R 2W0

Article by Anne Cunningham,
freelance writer, book project Resource Committee Member.

CONFERENCE LOOKS AT THE BRIGHTER SIDE OF LIFE

In this day and age of environmental disasters, concerns about our health care system, social issues, growing disparities between the rich and the poor, and rising costs of just about everything, it is sometimes hard to maintain a positive outlook on life.

On March 5th, 2009, the Cowichan Valley Eldercare Education Committee is holding a one-day conference at the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre on the Lighter Side of Senior(ity). We'll be exploring the flip side of the coin, showing how to regenerate our sense of fun and creativity and finding balance in day-to-day living. Guest speakers are Iain Hunter, columnist with the Times Colonist, and Colleen Hussey, recreation therapist.

Join us for lots of laughter, fun breakout sessions and great food. Details will be posted on the BCCHP website.

Susan Beaubier is a nutritionist who has worked and studied from coast to coast to coast in Canada. For the past two years, she has been a member of the BCCHP Core Team. In the second of a two-part series, Susan writes about the food and dietary challenges experienced by people living in Canada's far north.

ADVENTURES IN NUTRITION: HEALTH PROMOTION NORTH OF 60°

PART II

In Yukon and a number of NWT communities, food is trucked from the south – this is costly both in terms of cost and quality. In Nunavut and isolated NWT communities, dry goods are delivered annually through sea lift in the summer and perishables are flown in year round at great cost. To alleviate this cost, air shipment costs of nutritious perishables are subsidized by the federal government. Again, due to handling and weather conditions, the quality of perishables is an issue.



Currently the Departments of Health and Social Services in each of the territories, along with Health Canada have increased their support for health promotion and food security initiatives. In 1992 Health Canada's Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program introduced a modest investment in raising the nutrition knowledge and skills of prenatal and breastfeeding women in a community-based context. Brighter Futures federal funding supports breakfast, snack and lunch programs in some communities. The Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative is another federal funding stream that supports nutrition and physical activity promotion.

In addition to federally funded programs the territorial governments focus on integrated approaches to health promotion and disease prevention. Community-based initiatives are common. It is important to put the tools in place to enable communities to craft their unique

solutions e.g. school cooking clubs. While accepted as a strong means to influence change, community-based, community-paced ways of working are essential in the north. There is a thirst for new knowledge and acquiring new skills so if communities are involved in planning and delivering health promotion initiatives the uptake can be considerable. The challenge is to maintain support at a sufficiently intensive level that it is meaningful.

In addition not for profit organizations such as Breakfast for Learning, provide funds for healthy school breakfast programs and snacks. Rotary Clubs and other organisations support gardening and greenhouse initiatives. Hunter and Trapper Organisations carry out community hunts and supply community freezers for local use.

Nutritionists acting in a public health capacity and registered dietitians acting in clinical and community capacities are employed by all territories. These are exciting positions that offer a broad and challenging scope of practice. These professionals work in a variety of health promotion and clinical positions and are very self reliant. The opportunity to work with people of different cultural backgrounds is an added bonus. It is true Canadian adventure.

Reference:

Ledrou I and Gervais J. (2005) Food Insecurity. *Statistics Canada Health Reports* 16(3). Ottawa.

CLOSING THE GAP IN A GENERATION: HEALTH EQUITY THROUGH ACTION ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death. We watch in wonder as life expectancy and good health continue to increase in parts of the world and in alarm as they fail to improve in others.

Inequities are killing people on a "grand scale" reports WHO Commission

"(The) toxic combination of bad policies, economics, and politics is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically possible," the Commissioners write in *Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health*.

The Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) supports countries and global health partners to address the social factors leading to ill health and inequities. It draws the attention of society to the social determinants of health that are known to be among the worst causes of poor health and inequalities between and within countries. The determinants include unemployment, unsafe workplaces, urban slums, globalization and lack of access to health systems.

World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/

According to the advocacy group *First Call*, British Columbia has the highest rate of child poverty in the country, at 21.9 per cent - November 2008 BC Child Poverty Report Card: <http://www.firstcallbc.org/>.

TO CHILDREN, POVERTY IS ...

Not being able to go to McDonald's
Getting a basket from the Santa Fund
Feeling ashamed when my dad can't get a job
Not buying books at the book fair
Not getting to go to birthday parties
Hearing my mom and dad fight over money
Not being able to have your friends sleep over
Pretending that you forgot your lunch
Being afraid to tell your mom you need gym shoes
Not having breakfast sometimes
Not being able to play hockey
Not being able to go to Cubs or play soccer

Sometimes really hard because my mom gets scared and she cries
Not being able to take swimming lessons
Not being able to afford a holiday
Not having pretty barrettes for your hair
Not ever getting a pet because it costs too much
Wishing you had a nice house
Not being able to go camping
Not getting a hot dog on hot dog day
Not having your own private backyard
Being teased for the way you are dressed
Not getting to go on school trips

HEALTH OFFICERS COUNCIL OF BC DISCUSSION PAPER

The Health Officers Council of BC has just released its discussion paper on *Health Inequities in British Columbia*. The intent of this paper is to use BC data to describe existing health inequities in the province, and to discuss policy options that offer the greatest opportunities to effectively address those inequities.

Read more at Publications: <http://www.phabc.org/>.

HUMAN HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF THE ENVIRONMENT: A TENUOUS RELATIONSHIP

At a recent meeting of the BCCHP, Dr. John Scull, Cowichan Valley eco-psychologist and environmental advocate, discussed the relationship between our health and that of the eco-system.

Of particular concern, Dr. Scull noted, is the widespread distribution of toxins such as mercury and cadmium, air pollution, radioactive materials found in the food chain and health threats from bisphenol A, PCBs and furans from such things as wood smoke and plastics. This addiction to unhealthy environmental habits is like any other addiction, he said, affecting corporations, governments or individuals.

Other threats include the depletion of aquifers and the destruction of rivers from soil erosion. Rapid climate change, destructive agricultural practices and lack of regulations for logging and real estate development are largely to blame. All of this creates a phenomena called 'extinction of experience,' noted Dr. Scull. The disappearance of animals or plants means that we can no longer experience them and as a result, we are becoming increasingly distanced from nature.

Solutions include selective logging, more parklands, regulations to protect rivers and streams, developing a new food delivery system and supporting initiatives such as OUR Ecovillage and the Cowichan Valley Land Trust. Most innovation in the environmental field comes from the non-profit sector, Dr. Scull said.

MEMBER NEWS

Our newest Core Team member

Marilyn Day, a professional adult educator and independent community-based researcher, started her career in education at UBC. She gained teaching experience in rural Manitoba, North York, ON and Winnipeg, MB. Twenty years later she changed career directions to study, research and work with disenfranchised adults and disempowered families. To meet the needs of adults and youths with education and learning challenges, Marilyn built and operated an adult education centre which has evolved gradually into an independent research organization specializing in community-based research projects.

Personal and professional experience whilst working with and researching concerns of disempowered women has motivated Marilyn to direct her interests and time to explore and to promote literacies that support development of personal empowerment. Marilyn has volunteered as a board member for community and professional groups. She is the Past President of Literacy Partners of Manitoba. Marilyn earned a masters (Higher Education) from University of Manitoba and a PhD. from Nottingham University, UK (Focus: Education for Adults – thesis: *The Empowerment of Women: A Study of Women's Participation in Training Programs in Manitoba*).



UPDATED PSYCHIATRIC DRUG BOOKLET AVAILABLE SOON

Interested in knowing the full scoop about psychiatric drugs? If so, the 2009 edition of the booklet *What People Need to Know About Psychiatric Drugs* will be available soon. Authors E Daisy Anderson and Janet Currie give a comprehensive, straight forward account about the effects of anti-depressants, sleeping pills, anti-psychotics, mood stabilizers and stimulants.

“The booklet is packed with facts and tips to help readers make informed choices. There is no other grass roots resource like it,” said Daisy. She noted that 800 copies of the 2005 edition were distributed throughout Canada. The booklet is affordable as costs cover printing and mailing only.

To order your copy please e-mail Daisy at wowhouse@shaw.ca To learn more about psychiatric drugs check out the Psychiatric Medication Awareness Group's web site www.psychmedaware.org.

JOIN THE COALITION

Annual fee:

No one is refused membership because of inability to pay.

Individuals	\$10.00
Groups	\$25.00
Corporate	\$50.00

Membership:

Apply online: www.vcn.bc.ca/bchpc/
Mail cheque to: Peter Kiessling
Membership Coordinator
BC Coalition for Health Promotion
306 - 245 First St
Duncan BC V9L 1R3

Benefits:

- Participate in events with well-known speakers in the health promotion field
- Invitations to BCCHP forums and conferences
- Opportunities for networking and input into BCCHP priorities
- Voting privileges at the AGM
- The opportunity to hold office in the Society
- Bi-annual newsletter, *Communities Invest in Health Promotion*

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