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‘Hope Beyond Homelessness’ play continues to educate

The Richmond Advocacy and Support Committee (RASC) continues to move from strength to strength. A big part of our work has been staging more productions of the play, by RASC member Don Creamer, *Hope Beyond Homelessness*. The play has become a major educational tool to teach people about homelessness, what it is, who it impacts, and solutions to solve it.

In the summer and fall of this year the play was performed on four occasions. Once at a summer celebration held at Richmond Caring Place. Then a week later, the play, as well as comedy and poetry on health and wellness, took to the stage as part of Culture Days at the Richmond Cultural Centre. It was also featured during a major fundraiser for the St Albans Community Meal program: *Hope Beyond Homelessness* was a great way to give back to a meal program that has done so much over the years to support RASC members.

The play is now having an influence beyond Richmond and was recently performed at the H2H Housing Conference in Metrotown, among the audience were policy makers and decision makers from across the Lower-Mainland. This fall and winter we intend to showcase the play for staff training at community centres and at schools.

This is all to keep our work going to teach about the lived experience of poverty and homelessness. If you have direct experience of poverty, and are interested in the arts and campaigning to make a difference, then come and join us. We are a diverse family of individuals who are having fun, learning, and changing our community for the better. No experience needed, just bring your enthusiasm — we are now making plans, so help us decide on what we do next. Email info@richmondprc.org for more information.

Transportation Task Force update

Kudos to Translink for meeting with members from the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and Transportation Task Force, and stakeholders, for two-way communication on its Transit 2050 plan.

We gathered at 312 Main St, which is the site of the former VPD station now repurposed as community space, and had a lively discussion on what we need for better and fairer transit. This location, being in the centre of Skid Row, made me feel that the event connected to the heart of the city and was intended to include those hardest hit by imposed poverty.

We were divided into tables of six, with a facilitator, who took notes on our ideas for several questions asked by the transit representative. My table looked at the barriers caused by poverty and built a wishlist, including, of course, the #AllOnBoard requests. Translink iterated that transit is intended for all, without barriers. They wanted our thoughts on how to achieve that: for example, what it would look like over the next 30 years of rider-focused improvements?

I was impressed — which is not easy, trust me! — by Translink's attitude and commitment to a public engagement process. I'm expecting good things to come out of this. Every step forward is a good move...

The Transportation Task Force (TTF) is a sub-committee of the Richmond PRC. If you are interested in becoming involved, please email info@richmondprc.org.

— George Pope, TTF



Richmond Homeless Connect in 11th year

Every October, the Homeless Connect event is a sort of one-stop shop of services connecting those in need with help. RPRC chair De Whalen details this year's event below

During Homelessness Action Week, on Oct. 17 the Richmond community came together to welcome guests at the 11th

annual Richmond Community (Homeless) Connect at St. Alban Anglican Church.

About 65 people who are without an address or in precarious circumstances attended. They enjoyed the services provided by 30 community agencies and numerous volunteers such as haircuts, foot care, dental hygiene, chair massages and bike repair as well as a pancake breakfast and a nutritious luncheon.

Guests were also provided with clothing and footwear collected from thoughtful Richmond residents, and take-away healthy snacks and hygiene kits. Local community

agencies on site provided referrals to income assistance, addiction services and mental wellness services as well as information and resources from Elections Canada, Richmond City and Richmond Library.

This Connect event is only possible with the support of community members, organizations, service clubs and businesses. On behalf of the organizers, we would like to thank Richmond Hospital Auxiliary, Richmond Health Services, St. Alban Anglican Church,

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Richmond 2019 Chew on This! Campaign

To mark Oct. 17, the International Day for the eradication of Poverty, volunteers from the RPRC joined communities across Canada for the seventh annual Chew on This! campaign. One day prior

we were outside the Mlnoru library for two hours in the morning with special marked bags, inside containing a postcard people were invited to sign, something to eat, and a magnet. Quite a number of people stopped to talk and sign the postcards asking the new government to commit to human rights policies and making poverty a budget priority. The next day we again invited people to do the same at the Richmond Connect event at St. Alban's. We were encouraged that individuals at both events, and at our October meeting, offered to participate and spread the message.

What is the Chew on This Campaign? It is a national campaign to raise awareness of food insecurity and poverty in Canada under the Dignity for All initiative launched in 2009. The co-leads of Dignity for All are Canada without Poverty (www.cwp-csp.ca) and Citizens for Public Justice (cpj.ca). In 2005, the campaign released its model plan, Dignity for All — a National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada — based on five years of consultation with 600 organizations, coalitions, faith groups and unions plus individuals across the country. Chew on This! is one part of the action.

In late August of 2019 Dignity for All welcomed the National Poverty Reduction Strategy as an important first step for our country, but the work does not end here. Millions of people living in poverty in Canada need significant action and investment to end their poverty. Nearly 900,000 use the food bank each month, and one in eight families struggle to put food on the table. The strategy focus should not simply be about reducing poverty. Instead the Government of Canada should honour its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to eliminate poverty by 2030.

If your organization or faith group is interested in doing their own campaign next year, please contact me at quamme@shaw.ca or one of the organizations above directly in the summertime.

-Deneanne Quamme. Richmond PRC



BC Thanksgiving Food Drive recap

The tenth annual BC Thanksgiving Food Drive took place in mid-September. For the Richmond Food Bank this is one of the major food drives of the year that garners a significant amount of food for our neighbours in need. 200 people, including food bank volunteers and members of the faith community prepared and delivered some 14,000 flyers and bags around the city. On Saturday, Sept.21, we collected over 10,500 pounds of quality, non-perishable food and \$403 from our generous members of the community. Donations are continuing to be made to food bank receptacles across the city. The organizers thank everyone involved and look forward to helping even more next year.

-John Roeder, Richmond PRC

Welcome baskets for Richmond modular housing residents

What do you do when someone moves into a new home? You give them a housewarming gift, of course. When the Richmond Poverty Response Committee confirmed that the 40 new residents of the supportive housing project on Alderbridge Road would soon be moving in, we decided to prepare a welcome basket for each of them, providing the essentials to make the first few days in the new environment a positive experience. RPRC worked with Raincity Housing that operates the new complex to determine what would be needed, and found out that a local faith organization would be providing kitchen items. So the focus was on things for the bathroom like a set of towels, laundry basket and personal hygiene products, as well as a few snack items.



Many of the essentials of daily living are included in the rent at Richmond modular housing. Residents receive breakfast and supper each day, and their units are fully furnished. There are common areas with television and W-Fi, and telephones are on each floor.

In order to buy items for the welcome baskets, RPRC raised funds and received donations from our member organizations, local businesses, faith communities and private citizens. During the fundraising campaign many opportunities to collaborate with other not-for-profit groups who wanted to help revealed themselves, and these efforts were coordinated with Raincity Housing. The groups met with staff undergoing training, and received tours of the complex after construction was completed to view the various configurations of the rooms — including ones designed for those with mobility challenges — and the common-

use areas such as the kitchen, dining area and lounges. Safety and security were top of mind evidenced by state of the art features such as call-buttons in accessible bathrooms and a video intercom at the entrance.



The welcome baskets were waiting for the residents when they took occupancy of their unit, who began arriving toward the end of April at the rate of up to three people a day over four weeks. Also included were some items of a personal nature including hand-made cards from local elementary school students, a welcome letter from RPRC and information on neighbourhood facilities such as the local library. We want to thank all those who participated in any way in the welcome basket project RPRC hopes everyone living in the modular housing on Alderbridge Road feel welcomed and integrate well into the communityxperience a good quality of life in their new homes.

— Deborah Turner, Richmond PRC

Steveston Rotary, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, St. Vincent de Paul, the UBC Bike Co-op, the City of Richmond and Camera One Photography for their numerous contributions to the event's success.

We would also like to thank individual Richmond residents for their generous financial donations. We also acknowledge and thank the many volunteers from a variety of community services, including youth groups and students, who gave their time to make sure that our guests received whatever they were seeking.

With this season comes a time of giving, but the needs of Richmond residents with no address happen year-round. Local community service agencies respond to immediate needs such as food and shelter but often there are emergent needs that come to their attention as a result.

Agencies that provide outreach and support services year-round to Richmonditers with no address or who are precariously housed are: St. Alban Anglican Church, Richmond Salvation Army, Turning Point Recovery Society and CHIMO Community Services. Any one of these organizations could put community donations to good use. Please contact them directly for information on how to make a donation.

— De Whalen, Richmond PRC



.... a coalition of Richmond residents and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects and public education.

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee has a strong track record of identifying gaps in services to the poor in our community, and partnering with suitable agencies to implement effective solutions. We have many ongoing and new projects that need your support.

VOLUNTEER: The RPRC welcomes the participation of all members of the community. There are regular meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 4:30 p.m. at the Richmond Caring Place. We also always need help at events, doing outreach, and putting together our newsletters.

To get involved: email info@richmondprc.org.

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