



# Richmond PRC Newsletter

❄️ Winter 2017-18 ❄️

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- First annual Richmond Action Forum
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And more...

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## Findings from ‘Barriers’ project conversation circles

In late 2016, the Richmond Poverty Response Committee launched the “Eliminating barriers to participation for Richmond residents experiencing poverty” project. Its aim is to help those living in poverty develop a self-advocacy network through which open dialogue can take place; inform service providers about pertinent issues related to the particular demographic; and create opportunities for individuals with similar goals to gather together in various public settings, for the purpose of discussing and sharing ideas on how to affect existing policies to promote barrier-free participation.

The first phase involved conducting a series of conversation circles, facilitated by trained volunteers, where both people experiencing poverty and agency staff could share their stories in a safe environment. Here is an executive summary of the final report based on those

conversation circles findings:

According to the Low-Income Measure, it is estimated that just over 22 per cent of Richmond residents would be considered low income in 2011. The percentage of low-income households is much greater than the provincial (16.4 per cent) and national (14.9 per cent) averages. We show that the experience of poverty results in substantial barriers to full participation in communities and in Richmond. Currently, we are failing to reduce the impacts of poverty.

Twenty-four agency staff and members of the public were trained in the conversation circle approach representing 15 different agencies. Fifty-five people participated in the conversation circles (a dialogue-based focus group approach) in Richmond, B.C. from February to June of 2017.

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# Service provider shares 'Barriers' project experience

Ruth Taverner (above middle in the photo) is the parent connections coordinator at Richmond Family Place. Her and her team help support families struggling with a variety of issues. She took part in the 'Barriers' project as both a volunteer and attendee, and shared some of her thoughts with us.

*Tell me a bit about your role at Richmond Family Place.*

**RT:** We work with parents that have children 0-6 and provide drop-in programs, parent education and resources.

*Can you describe some of the big barriers you see these folks facing in your field?*

**RT:** They are very caught up meeting their physical needs so food, shelter, clothing. Second to that is their ability to parent, creating bonds with their kids and getting them ready for kindergarten.

*What were your impressions of the project's conversation circles you attended?*

**RT:** I took the training and attended two. I think it was really great in that it gave a place for those who were actually experiencing poverty to say something, and as we know that is often a voice that gets lost in the mix. [The organizers] did a great job creating a safe and comfortable space that made it possible to share.

*How about on the service provider side?*

**RT:** We were able to hear not only what each other's concerns were but how everyone on this side is doing, and think of ways to best share resources and be on the same page. Sometimes I think we tend to duplicate services so this helps all those involved be more aware of what's going on and perhaps work better together to solve these problems.

Stay tuned to the PRC website to catch the rest of the interview with Ruth.

-Benjamin Yong, Richmond PRC

# Richmond Action Forum addresses six key issues surrounding poverty



On Sept. 28, 2017, the Richmond Advocacy and Support Committee and the Richmond Poverty Response Committee hosted the first annual Richmond Action Forum — Eliminating Barriers to Participation.

The objectives for this project and for this event are to help those living in poverty develop a space/community to share their stories; educate local service providers on the wide range of issues contributing to poverty; and create opportunities for like-minded folks to meet (via community forums, neighborhood gatherings, city council meetings, etc.) and create positive changes in Richmond.

The Action Forum was a full day workshop gathering 50 people from different areas of Richmond (people with direct experience in poverty, community and government staff, ministerial representatives, university students, and the broader community) to identify key issues, root causes and actions. These issues, root causes, and actions covered six topics: housing, food and water, health, transportation, childcare and safety.

Participants described the range of issues that were impacting their lives in small table discussions. These issues were then prioritized for further discussion and analysis. Root causes for priority issues were identified and discussions generated actions to address these root causes and issues.

To read the report on the Richmond Action Forum, visit [www.richmondprc.org/resources/reports](http://www.richmondprc.org/resources/reports).

- Colin Dring, Richmond PRC



## Upcoming events

Here are some important dates to mark on your calendar for 2018:

**Feb. 3 and 9:** Richmond Overdose Prevention and Education Network is hosting an event that will be focusing on the overdose crisis in the Richmond (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Brighthouse Library).

**March 10 and 20:** The provincial government is holding B.C. Poverty Reduction community meetings in various cities to hear residents' ideas on how to tackle poverty (for locations go to [engage.gov.bc.ca/bcpovertyreduction](http://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcpovertyreduction))

**April:** National Volunteer Month

**April 2:** World Autism Awareness Day

**May:** Child Care Month

**June:** BC Seniors' Week (dates TBA)

**October:** Women's History Month

**Oct. 17:** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

**Nov. 21 to Dec. 1:** Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness week

Conversation Circles were hosted at Richmond organizations and community spaces: CHIMO Community Services, Gilmore Park United Church, Richmond Centre for Disabilities, Richmond Food Bank Society, Richmond Multicultural Community Services, and Touchstone Family Association.

All participants spoke to their experiences struggling to survive and the desire for a 'good life'. This 'good life' was described as able to meet basic needs: affordable and well-maintained housing, affordable transportation, and a living wage. In addition to these basic needs, participants expressed a desire to contribute to their communities. These arose through an identification of short and long term solutions to barriers to participation in society.

Participants discussed the need for skills and knowledge to put their ideas into action. We proposed the formation of a group comprising people with lived experience of poverty supported by the broader Richmond community — this group's purpose will be to advocate for and support people experiencing poverty.

For the complete final report, visit the website at [www.richmondprc.org/resources/reports](http://www.richmondprc.org/resources/reports).

— Benjamin Yong/Colin Dring, 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.

**DONATE:** As a non-profit organization, the RPRC depends upon generous donors like you. Your tax-deductible gift will help support our research, education, and projects. Please make cheques payable to the Richmond Food Bank Society and add 'Poverty Response Committee' on the memo line. To get involved: call 604-205-1200 or email [info@richmondprc.org](mailto:info@richmondprc.org).

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