



Supporting schools, communities and families in

healthy living

February 2009/Edition 1

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to BCHLA

Eat your veggies! Get off the couch! Don't smoke! How often have we heard those admonishments? While sometimes they work, more often than not - the words flow past closed ears and we continue on with our usual habits.

So when the BC Healthy Living Alliance began its work several years ago, our challenge was to think creatively and act in new ways to help people understand how their health is affected when they don't "eat healthy, be active or stop smoking!!"

The evidence is clear that chronic diseases such as heart and stroke, cancer, diabetes and lung diseases are caused or exacerbated by our lifestyles. The negative effects can be dire – to ourselves and our families. And this creates a drain on the healthcare system and our province.

However, with the help of the BC Government and the many partners of BCHLA we have taken up the challenge. Now in 105 communities throughout BC we have 373 activities on the ground. *Quitters Unite* is grabbing the attention of young smokers and uniting their resolve to quit, *Sip Smart* is helping Grade 4-6 students in 163 classrooms understand just how much sugar is in their favourite drinks. Family physicians with the cooperation of



Jean Blake, Chair BCHLA, ED CDA (middle row, 2nd from right) and Barbara Kaminsky CEO CCS (front row, 2nd from left) at Smoke Free Workplaces event

the BC Medical Association are prescribing "walking" to patients using the resources developed through our *Walk BC* initiative.

These and many more programs are providing new ways to approach and encourage British Columbians to lead healthier lifestyles. When they are complete in March 2010, just after the Olympics, we believe the work of the BC Healthy Living Alliance will have made a major contribution to achieving the goal of "British Columbia being the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Winter Olympics".

We hope that this newsletter may pique your interest and that you will take the time to visit our website at www.bchealthyliving.ca to learn more about our work.

Jean Blake, Chair, BC Healthy Living Alliance & Executive Director, Canadian Diabetes Association, Pacific Region



TOBACCO REDUCTION

Quitters Unite to Tell their Boss, I Quit!

Quitters Unite! is a call to action for BC youth. Street teams, facebook messages, on-line support, and edgy materials at trendy retailers and coffee shops reach out and speak to youth about tobacco in the language of their peers.

Young adults from 19-29 years old have the highest rates of smoking and are a prime target of tobacco marketers. But because we know this group won't respond to the usual finger-wagging, we teamed up with BCIT marketing students to develop a more meaningful message. And through partnerships with post-secondary institutions and employers we're broadcasting that message where they play, live, work and learn.

The Tell Your Boss, I Quit campaign is provided to BC workplaces by the Canadian Cancer Society. The pilot worksites include industries in which many 19-29 year olds work, such as: Milestones, TELUS, Teck Cominco and Grouse Mountain Resort. "Smokers are finding that knowing they have the support of the company makes it easier to quit," says Kate Carty, Program Manager.

Grouse Mountain has a very ambitious goal – they want to be the first smoke free mountain resort in BC. Grouse Mountain is the largest employer of youth on the North Shore with 700 staff in the winter peak - 65% of whom are youth. They kicked off their efforts in June 2008 on World No Tobacco Day, by asking employees and visitors alike to 'butt out' for the day."

Grouse Mountain General Manager Michael Cameron says he feels a responsibility to be a leader, and wants "to be part of the goal to make BC the healthiest region to ever host an Olympic and Paralympic Games." And the BCHLA is there to support British Columbians like Michael who are striving to realize our shared great goal.



Quitters Unite street team in action

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Building tomorrow's leaders

The old adage goes – give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, you feed him for life.

This is the philosophy behind BCHLA's Community Capacity Building Strategy led by Canadian Cancer Society. But they take it a few steps further. As program manager, Rose Soneff, says, "does the man want to learn to fish, are fish available in his community, what tools will the man need to fish with, and are there other fishermen in his area who might act as mentors?"

This philosophy is put into action by building community leaders, connections and local capacity to sustain healthy living programs over the long term. You may be asking what does community capacity building really do? An example from Vancouver Island illustrates how.

A small grant was provided to support a series of workshops on Vancouver Island, led and designed by aboriginal youth, who are learning not only about local traditions, culture and food, but event planning, agenda setting and leadership. These are skills that will benefit and stay in their communities as these young leaders grow.

The workshop brought out First Nations youth like Shannon, who said, "growing up in the Alberni Valley I was disconnected from my culture and it wasn't until later

in my life that I started to discover more about Nuu-chan-nulth way of life.”

The first workshop was a great success, attended by 150 area youth, where the hope of the committee was to attract 70. Program coordinator, John Rampanen noted, “Our efforts focused on a day long workshop for youth in Ahousaht which... was well attended with youth representing six different Nuu-chah-nulth Nations from the area and it was also received very well by parents, teachers and elders.”

BCHLA’s Community Capacity Building Facilitators are working with local leaders across the province, on similar projects - to identify ways to connect people and build stronger, healthier communities.



Seaweed 101 for Nuu-chan-nulth youth at Ahousaht workshop

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Creating healthier ways to go

How to create a "solid game plan for active transportation".

British Columbians that walk and cycle for transportation make physical activity a part of their day, rather than trying to squeeze it in at the end of their day. That is likely why we find lower rates of obesity in those places with good sidewalks, paths and other amenities. BCHLA’s Built Environment and Active Transportation initiative, co-led by the BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Union of BC Municipalities, is investing in the potential of BC communities to increase walking and cycling as practical ways of getting around.

Planning grants of up to \$20,000 to increase cycling and walking were awarded to ten BC communities in the first phase of the initiative. Phase 2 grants will be announced this spring.

The Town of Qualicum has used their BEAT grant to create a “solid game plan for active transportation.” They are working on creating a ‘spine’ that will take citizens east to west across the community. As Luke Sales, Town of Qualicum Beach planner explains, “it’s not a pie in the sky plan.” The town has set priorities and is using their plan to apply for both Local Motion and Cycling Infrastructure Partnership Program provincial grants to make their vision a reality.

BEAT is looking at bringing champions and communities together for a 2nd Summit set for April 2nd in Nanaimo. They will be focusing on how to help plan for communities that help seniors age in place and keep active through their transportation choices. So save the date and join BEAT in Nanaimo!



HEALTHY EATING

Schools get happy with healthy snacks

Take one determined principal, an enthusiastic group of parents, some whole wheat flour and a bit of support from Dietitians of Canada and you get a recipe for happy and healthy kids.

Dietitians of Canada is leading this BCHLA Healthy Eating Initiative to support easier, faster and happier implementation for the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools.



Twin Rivers Elementary School in Castlegar has embraced the challenge. Principal, Patrick Audet is proud of how proactive they've been in adopting the healthy eating guidelines. He explains that "the school had been working for three years slowly, which makes things easier now because they had the lead time to discuss the guidelines with parents." They also knew that the changes would impact some of their traditional fundraising events.

An advertisement went home to inform parents that this year they would be trading in their old 'cake bingo' for a 'healthy snacks bingo'.

As noted on www.healthyeatingatschool.ca, Parents were very creative. One dad decided he was not going to make dessert; he was going to bake bread. He also attached the recipe – the bread looked beautiful and was the most sought-after item. The group raised about \$500. A happy parent, Natalie Hipwell, said "It was great! We all, including the kids, had a blast. We made as much money, if not more, as in previous years."

Twin Rivers also has its own school store where they sell healthy snacks baked at the neighbouring secondary school, Stanley Humphries. Mr. Audet's school success story has been shared at forums and at the 'healthy eating at school' website. He found that "meeting with other professionals to discuss what implementing the guidelines on the ground meant was very helpful", allowing colleagues to collaborate on potential issues and solutions.

Great resources created through the initiative include the *Bake Better Bites* cookbook for Parent Advisory Councils and a rating system for packaged and franchised food and beverages can be found at www.brandnamefoodlist.ca.

HEALTHY FUTURES FOR BC FAMILIES

Not all British Columbians enjoy equal health outcomes. Much of this gap is attributable to the underlying social conditions which have such an impact on whether or not we can engage in healthy lifestyles.

BCHLA believes BC can become a global leader in addressing health inequities – we see that there is both a strong evidence base and public support for this direction.

BCHLA is bringing together community leaders to discuss how to ensure Healthy Futures for BC Families

- Interior (Williams Lake) February 13
- North (Prince George) March 12
- Vancouver Island (Nanaimo) March 25

For more information visit www.bchealthyliving.ca



ActNowBC

