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# BC Housing

Tenant Newsletter  
December 2011

# News FOR YOU

H O U S I N G U P D A T E

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 2

## Two Tenants Honoured for their Contributions to the People, Plants and Homes Program

Tenants Carol Newby and Yvette Dina were recognized for their almost 35 combined years of service to the People, Plants and Homes program at last summer's garden parties.

Carol, who now lives at Champlain Place in Vancouver, started helping with the program when she lived at Orchard Park. "I moved there in 1993 and started giving out plants from the People, Plants and Homes program the next year. I've been doing it ever since," recalled Carol. "I walk around and help with cleaning up common areas and yards. And I encourage others to garden... it's so calming. I'm known as the gardening lady."

Yvette has been volunteering with the program for 15 years from her home in Hall Tower 1 in Burnaby as her site's garden coordinator. She makes sure the common lots are well looked after and maintains a waiting list when plots do come available. "I like to grow everything: flowers and vegetables. I like to eat what I grow and sometimes I have too much for myself so I share it with my neighbours."

Both women were surprised to receive the David Tarrant Spirit of Gardening Award. The award is given annually to a tenant(s) who makes extraordinary contributions to the People, Plants and Home program.

"I was deeply honoured," said Carol. "There are lots of deserving people so I was totally surprised and overwhelmed."

"When my name was called, I thought my heart would stop," added Yvette. "I was delighted."



Top Right: Regional Operations Manager Gisèle Sabourin (left) presents Yvette Dina with her Spirit of Gardening Award.

Bottom Right: Carol Newby receives the Spirit of Gardening Award from BC Housing CEO Shayne Ramsay (left) and Executive Regional Director Dale McMann.

## BC Housing Education Awards Help Tenants Return to School



This fall BC Housing distributed 98 education awards and bursaries to people across the province enrolled in post-secondary educational and training programs. Congratulations to all the recipients who are pursuing their goals and learning new skills.

Rachel de Kerf of Kamloops is using her \$750 bursary to help her complete a medical office assistant program. "Life has handed me so many challenges and obstacles on the road to getting where I am. As a single mother of five, I consider motherhood my greatest accomplishment and my first and foremost career. But I have completely embraced this new direction. I'm looking forward to finishing my schooling, beginning a new journey in my life and embarking on a professional career."

For Victoria's Maxym Rukosuyev, an education award means he will be able to continue working towards completing his degree in mechanical engineering. "My family immigrated to Canada in 2007 with the hope of creating a better life. It has been an adjustment, but I hope that by furthering my education and becoming an engineer, I can give back to society and help create a better future for everyone."

Ti'etinqox member and Prince George resident Valerie Stump is the recipient of a \$1,000 Minerva Foundation Award. Valerie was told after aptitude testing that she would never be successful in any academic program. She is now working towards a masters' degree in First Nations studies at the University of Northern British Columbia. "I knew I was ready for university, and I'm excelling with great marks. When I go home for the summer, I try to give back and help inspire other students. I can help to set a path for younger generations in my community, including my daughter. Anything is possible as long as you have a passion for your goal."

Are you eligible for a BC Housing Education Award? Tenants between the ages of 17 and 64 who are planning to attend post-secondary or vocational training are encouraged to apply. Visit [www.bchousing.org/tenants/services/educationawards](http://www.bchousing.org/tenants/services/educationawards) for details about the 2012 program in January.

BC Housing Education Awards can be used towards post-secondary academic studies or vocational training.

## BC Housing Holiday Schedule

BC Housing's offices around the province will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Tuesday, December 27, 2011 and on Monday, January 2, 2012.

If a major maintenance emergency such as burst or frozen pipes, fire, or loss of heat arises when BC Housing offices are closed, please call our Emergency Services:

- Metro Vancouver: 604-682-4852**
- Victoria: 250-213-8798**
- Interior: 1-800-834-7149**
- Prince George: 250-562-9251**
- Prince Rupert: 250-627-7501**

All other communities are encouraged to contact their Site Representative.

A reminder to tenants in our northern and interior communities: during cold spells, please leave your heat on when you are away to prevent pipes from freezing. If possible, have a friend or family member check your home while you are away.

### IN AN EMERGENCY

If your safety or someone else's safety is at risk, call 911 immediately.





## Remembering Ken Best

Ken Best, who served many years as president of the Doug Drummond Tenant Association and was co-chair of the Public Housing Advisory Council, passed away peacefully on September 21, 2011 at St. Michael's Hospice in Burnaby.

Ken is remembered and admired for his tenacious spirit and generous heart along

with his love of Egyptian history, his Halloween costumes, and his Christmas decorations. His leadership running an award-winning tenant meal program is a testament to his commitment to bettering the lives of tenants living in public housing communities.

In 2009, Ken was recognized by the City of Burnaby with the Local Hero Award for founding the Garden View lunch program. In his acceptance of the award, Ken shared his success with those he worked with. "We all volunteer because we want to give

something back to the community," he said at the time. The lunch program has served thousands of meals to residents at Doug Drummond and the surrounding community over the years.

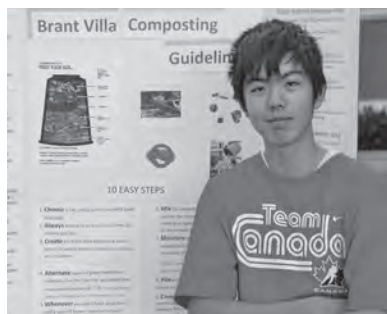
A celebration of Ken's life was held at Doug Drummond Manor with his family and friends in attendance. BC Housing will be installing a bench at the development as a tribute to Ken.

# Work Readiness Programs for Youth

BC Housing ran three programs over summer 2011 to help youth who live in our sites gain valuable job skills and work experience.

## Gaining Work Experience while Helping the Environment

Fifteen-year-old BC Housing tenant Johnny has always thought of himself as being aware of environmental issues. But his recent experience as part of the Green Collar Corps (GCC) has given him new insights. He joined the after-school group in fall 2010 and learned about energy conservation, climate change and other sustainability issues. Then, in summer 2011, Johnny participated in the GCC's paid eco-internship as part of BC Housing's Student Tenant Employment Program. Johnny's internship included skills training such as conflict resolution, resume writing and certifications in FOODSAFE and First Aid in the first week of the program. He then worked with Ameresco tenant engagement staff organizing educational activities at two Vancouver sites: Culloden Court and Brant Villa.



Brant Villa tenant Johnny was part of this past summer's eco-internship program.

"We ran kids day camps where we talked about issues like recycling and water conservation and ways they could create a better environment for themselves," said Johnny. "And we ran workshops for adults on recycling and composting."

Johnny learned a lot researching for his presentations and by listening to other points of view. "Those are skills that will help me in future jobs," he said. "That experience and the chance to interact with more people also increased my confidence. The Green Collar Corps has been a great way for me to meet friends, find out what's happening around the world, and ways we can work to make it a better place."

The Green Collar Corps eco-internships were part of BC Housing's Tenant Engagement on Sustainability pilot program to educate tenants about sustainable behaviour and to encourage participants to take action. Other BC Housing sites for the pilot program are Grandview Terrace and Hall Tower 2, where activities are led by BC Healthy Communities. The program is run in partnership with FortisBC and Ameresco.

## 24 Proud STEP to Work Grads

This past summer, 24 youth from sites around the Lower Mainland took part in BC Housing's STEP to Work employment training program. Participants, who were between the ages of 15 to 18, took a one-week training session followed by six-week job placements with a variety of employers including retailers and community services. Six of the youth were offered employment with their job mentors following the program.

Seventeen-year-old Carolina Court resident Christina spent her placement working and volunteering with Ray Cam Community Centre. "I worked with Ray Cam's day camp and also took part in their Naskarz program where I learned fabricating and welding," she said. "I really enjoyed and

benefited from the program. It helped me open up and learn to communicate."

Sixteen-year-old Naemo also saw her self-confidence climb by taking part in STEP to Work. The Orchard Park tenant wanted the experience the program provides in order to have the skills to find other jobs in the future. Naemo spent her summer with South Vancouver Neighbourhood House's out-of-school care program. "The program was really helpful," remarked Naemo. "The certificates we earned make my resume look way better and increase my chances of getting other jobs."

Recruitment for the summer 2012 STEP to Work program will begin next spring.



2011 STEP to Work students with BC Housing representatives.

# Victoria Youth Shine in Leadership Development Program

Ten tenants between the ages of 15 to 18 from sites throughout Greater Victoria took part in this summer's STEP Up Leadership Development program. That's double the number who took part last year in this City of Victoria program run in partnership with BC Housing. The program also expanded to offer all younger children at four Victoria sites the chance to participate in the neighbourhood playground program. The program, which received an Award of Excellence from the BC Recreation and Parks Association in 2010, was expanded in response to positive feedback.

STEP Up Leadership Development includes a two-week Leaders-in-Training course followed by six weeks of practical experience. For the BC Housing youth that practical experience meant facilitating games, crafts, and activities for a neighbourhood playground program offered to families with children aged five to 12 at Evergreen Terrace. The program, which included honorariums to the leaders who successfully completed it, teaches skills that serve as the basis for

anyone interested in pursuing a career in recreation, child and youth care, education, counselling, or nursing.

One of the participants was 18-year-old Tim, a resident at Battin Fielding. "I've always lived in complexes and I enjoy playing with younger children," said Tim about why he wanted to take part in the program. "It was really fun; the best summer of my life. We took care of the children, played games, and went swimming sometimes." Tim has continued his involvement with the program; he is currently volunteering his time and working on community activities through the City of Victoria's STEP Up Youth Leadership Crew.

The program received great feedback from families. Parents paid \$2 a week for their children to participate and were able to use the time to take a much-needed break, get chores done, or look for work while knowing their children were in good care. The City of Victoria hopes to continue the partnership next year.



# Accessing Low-Cost or No-Cost Food Programs

Eating healthy meals is a challenge when you have to stick to a strict budget. Affordable options include food banks, good food box programs, and Quest Food Exchange.

## Quest Food Exchange

Quest is a food exchange program that helps low-income people in Metro Vancouver by providing access to nutritious food at discount rates. The program has three low-cost grocery markets in the Lower Mainland (two in Vancouver and one in Surrey) where clients can shop by referral. Referrals can be made by BC Housing staff including health service coordinators, tenant support workers, and community liaison workers.

Much of the food is the same quality as in grocery stores and is donated by local food wholesalers, restaurants, airlines, freight lines, supermarkets, and farmers. There are fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, bread, canned goods, desserts, meat, vitamins, and household items. Quest works closely with health inspectors and does not sell products past their expiration date (although some may be close to that date).

For more information about Quest Food Exchange: [www.questoutreach.org](http://www.questoutreach.org).

## Food Banks

There are food banks in many B.C. communities. They provide free food to those in need. Distribution points include community centres and places of worship. You can access a listing of B.C. food banks from this website: [www.foodbanksbritishcolumbia.ca](http://www.foodbanksbritishcolumbia.ca). Following are contact numbers for food banks in major centres.

Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society:  
604-876-3601

Surrey Food Bank Society:  
604-581-5443

Victoria: The Mustard Seed:  
250-953-1575

Prince George: Salvation Army Family Services: 250-564-4000 (ext. 227)

Prince Rupert: Salvation Army Family Services: 250-624-6180

Penticton: Salvation Army Community Food Bank: 250-492-4788

Kelowna Community Food Bank Society:  
250-763-7161

Cranbrook Food Bank Society:  
250-426-7664

## Good Food Box Programs

Good Food Box programs distribute fresh produce. Depending on the season, programs buy directly from farmers and pay wholesale prices. Volunteers do most of the packing, marketing and distribution with savings passed on to customers. Check online to see if there is a Good Food Box program in your community. Following are contact numbers for major centres.

Victoria: Capital Region Good Food Society:  
250-893-7635

Vernon and Okanagan: The Good Food Box:  
250-545-7617

Nanaimo: Nanaimo Foodshare Society:  
250-753-9393



## Summer Memories

Those lazy, hazy days of summer may feel like a long time ago now, but many sites have great memories of barbecues hosted by BC Housing with Ameresco and MCW Energy Solutions. The parties were celebrations of completed site renovations or a thank you to tenants for bearing with us during retrofits.

In Victoria, eight-year-old Evergreen Terrace resident Anthony was beyond excited when he heard his ticket number called during a raffle. As the winner of a brand new bike and helmet, Anthony wasn't concerned that the bike was too big for him. His older brother is using it now and will hand it back to Anthony once he's grown a bit.

In Prince Rupert, tenants at Mariposa Gardens and Pineridge Terrace got in on the action with the younger kids really enjoying face painting and other activities. The Mariposa event marked the sixth annual barbecue that Building Manager Bob Leighton has thrown for tenants.

Peace begins at home was the theme for the Brant Villa barbecue which coincided with World Peace Day. Organizers arranged for a community soccer day on the Vancouver site's basketball court. One of the highlights was the performance of hip-hop singer Ndidi Cascade, who is a friend of a Brant Villa tenant. There was a great turnout in spite of the rain and tenants had a good time getting to know one another better.

Above: Tenants Ashley (left) and Sheridan at the Pineridge barbecue.





# Dates to Remember

- ▶ People, Plants and Homes program: Plant order forms for Metro Vancouver and Victoria available March 2012.
  - ▶ Education Awards Program applications: available January 2012.
  - ▶ STEP to Work applications: available May 2012.
  - ▶ Applications for Special Event Funding for Tenant Activity Grants: available throughout the year.
- Contact your Building Manager or Site Representative for more information on any of these programs.

## Earthquake Smarts

Are you prepared in the event of an emergency such as a major earthquake? Here are some tips to help you through such a crisis.

### BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE

- Identify the safe places in your home. You are safest against an inside wall, under a strong table or desk.
- Avoid dangerous areas such as windows, mirrors, hanging pictures or plants, swinging doors, tall furniture, and overhead objects, such as light fixtures.
- Secure heavy pictures and mirrors, hanging plants, and tall, heavy furniture that could topple in an earthquake. Put latches on cabinet doors so they will stay closed during the shaking, and store heavy objects and breakables on lower shelves.
- Practice earthquake drills, so adults and children learn to place themselves in safe spots. Remember to drop, cover, and hold on!
- Keep an emergency supply kit with food, water, clothing, a first aid kit, flashlight, extra batteries, and a portable battery-operated radio.
- You should have enough food to last a minimum of three days. Foods that do not need cooking, like energy bars, fruit, crackers and peanut butter (if you are not allergic to it) are best.
- If you are dependent on medication, store enough to last at least a week.
- Learn first aid and CPR (Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation).
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers easily accessible.

### DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

- Remain calm and go to a safe spot. Take cover under a desk or table, or against an inside wall, or hallway. Hold this position.
- Stay away from windows, swinging doors, tall bookcases, filing cabinets, and other furniture that could fall over.
- Watch for falling objects and debris such as light fixtures, glass, or tiles, and protect your head with a coat, handbag, or book.
- Do not use elevators.
- If outside, get into an open area. Move away from trees, buildings, walls, and power lines. Do not enter buildings.
- If you are in an elevator, push all the floor buttons and get off at the first stop. If the elevator stops between floors, press the emergency button, and call for help on the intercom.
- If you are in an underground parking garage, crouch against a pillar or solid wall, and cover your head with a jacket or bag. Do not run.
- If you are in a car, stay in the car and get down on the floor. Do not try to drive away.
- After the earth stops shaking, wait 60 seconds before moving, and then check yourself, your family, and others for injuries.

For more tips, check out [www.shakeoutbc.ca](http://www.shakeoutbc.ca).

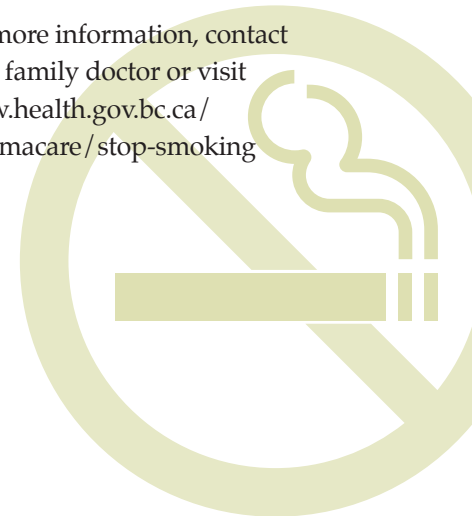
## Thinking about Quitting Smoking?

The provincial government has created a B.C. Smoking Cessation Program for residents who want to stop smoking or using other tobacco products. The program assists with the cost of prescription and non-prescription smoking cessation aids such as nicotine replacement therapy chewing gum or patches.

Each calendar year, eligible B.C. residents will be able to get either coverage for one prescription smoking cessation drug for a single continuous course of treatment or a supply of one nicotine replacement therapy product (gum or patch) at no charge for a single continuous course of treatment. (A course of treatment lasts for up to 12 weeks in a row.)

The Province will cover the cost for nicotine replacement therapies while other smoking cessation drugs will be covered by Pharmacare. Participants must register with HealthLink B.C. to be eligible.

For more information, contact your family doctor or visit [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/stop-smoking](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharmacare/stop-smoking)



## BC Housing Contact Information

*News For You* is published twice a year by BC Housing for the tenants of its public housing developments.

We welcome your feedback and inquiries.

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As a result of printing this on recycled paper, our environmental reductions were:

trees saved	water	greenhouse landfill	greenhouse emissions	greenhouse energy
4 fully grown	383 gallons	1 cubic yard	632 pounds	499 kilowatt hours