

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | Message from the CEO<br>African Children's<br>Homework Club<br>Award for Greenbrook<br>Kids Clubhouse | 2 | Council message<br>People, Plants and Homes<br>Battin Fielding programs | 3 | Fraser Region recycling program<br>Grant McNeil Resource Centre<br>Sunset Towers residents<br>get physical | 4 | Dates to remember<br>Safety first<br>Tenant tips<br>Contact information |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|



# BC Housing

Tenant Newsletter

June 2008

# News FOR YOU

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

VOLUME 23, ISSUE 1

## Message from the CEO



Shayne Ramsay

It always impresses me how many activities go on at BC Housing sites throughout the province. In this issue, we focus on a few of these: People, Plants and Homes; the African Children's Homework Club; the resource centre at Grant McNeil; programs at Battin Fielding. Many of these would not be possible without the input and assistance of tenant volunteers. Your contributions are vital to creating healthy and vibrant communities and I appreciate all you do to organize and work together to carry out these important programs.

We all benefit when people come together. Volunteering is an enriching experience that allows you to meet new people and make new friends. You get to use your current skills and gain some new ones. Being a good neighbour also makes a big difference to how you feel about where you live. Over the summer months, take the time to get to know your neighbours. Share a meal with someone; form a walking club; or apply for a Tenant Activity Grant and organize a barbecue.

However you choose to spend the summer, enjoy these next few months and I hope I will have the opportunity to spend time with you at some of your site's special events.

Regards,

Shayne Ramsay

## It takes a village



For over three years, young tenants living at Hillside Gardens and Cedar Place in Burnaby have been attending a special program called the African Children's Homework Club. The Club is run by the REACH Community Health Centre Multicultural Family Centre with tutors from the Friends of Simon immigrant literacy program and Frontier College, in community space provided by BC Housing.

The Club is attended primarily by elementary school children who live on site and who have come to Canada as refugees from Africa. All children at some point can need extra support after school with their homework and the Club is able to offer this free of charge.

"The children feel comfortable working on their reading and writing skills here," said Program Facilitator Ilyambabazi Sebyeza. "They enjoy the activities we offer and seem eager to attend. These children are getting the help they need to make positive contributions to society later in life."

Left: A tutor helps a child with homework as part of the African Children's Homework Club.



Above: Kids in the kitchen cooking program at Greenbrook

## Greenbrook program wins award

The Greenbrook Kids Clubhouse, a program offered at the Greenbrook site in Surrey, is the winner of the 2008 BC Recreation and Parks Association Program Excellence Award.

The Clubhouse offers tenants aged six to 15 social and recreational opportunities both after school and during holidays. Kids do homework, play games, get involved with special activities and participate in the kids in the kitchen cooking program. The programs have had a very positive effect on children and youth at Greenbrook.

The Greenbrook Kids Clubhouse is a partnership between BC Housing and the City of Surrey's Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

## New Home Office address

If you are planning to write or visit BC Housing's Home Office, in Burnaby, please note that we have moved from the sixth to the seventeenth floor. All phone and fax numbers remain the same and the addresses for all our regional offices also remain the same.

Here is the new mailing address for Home Office:

1701 – 4555 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4V8

# Public Housing Advisory Council message

Sharon Mohamed, Chair



Sharon Mohamed

Over the past two years, I have been involved with a pilot program in my community: the Thunderbird Restorative Justice Initiative. This project is a partnership between tenants at Skeena Terrace (where I live), Thunderbird Community Centre, Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre, and the Vancouver Police Department. Evelyn Zellerer is coordinating the program.

For three days in January, I was one of about 20 people participating in an intensive peacemaking circle training workshop led by world-renowned trainers in the restorative justice field: retired judge Barry Stuart and Kay Pranis. Residents at Skeena Terrace are very excited about this initiative

and its potential to bring healing, accountability and resolution. People who are affected by crimes or conflicts will be able to come together to discuss what happened, why, who was hurt, and what needs to be done to make things right.

I mention this program because it is something that I would never have had the opportunity to participate in if I wasn't a volunteer in my community. When you do volunteer, it is amazing the differences you can make. When you read the stories in this newsletter, remember that we have many chances to volunteer and/or participate right in our own buildings. I am sure you will find that getting involved in your community brings huge personal rewards.

## Tenants offer programs at Victoria site

Battin Fielding in Victoria is alive with activities... many of which are planned and run by tenants themselves. Residents can share in an afternoon tea, participate in a Rummoli tournament, enjoy brunch and a movie, or do some handiwork with the stitching group.

Gillian Bryan, a community developer with the Blanshard Community Centre, helps with event organization. She also lets tenants know about other activities happening in their community, like the bird watching club at the neighbouring Swan Lake Nature Reserve. She also organizes events, like a Tai Chi instructor who gives classes on site, or the opportunity for tenants to purchase their fruits and veggies at discount prices through the Good Food Box program.

"Activities are a great way to get people out of their homes," said Gillian. "Through these they meet their neighbours and make friends. I encourage all tenants to reconnect with their community and enjoy active living."



Participants in the peacemaking circle training included Sharon Mohamed (back row on the right).

## LET'S GET GROWING!

People, Plants and Homes will play an active role in BC Housing's new livegreen plan. This year, the program is shifting its focus to growing foods organically and to promoting recycling, composting and sustainability.

Based on the results of the recent garden survey, an overwhelming number of respondents agree with this environmentally responsible direction and would like to have more resources directed to education and food production. With this in mind, in lieu of the garden competition, People, Plants and Homes will be piloting workshops on composting, growing vegetables year-round, and preserving the harvest. Watch for scheduled events in your area.

We will continue to have the Lower Mainland and Victoria Garden Parties in August. These will be an opportunity for us to celebrate as a community our achievements in the garden. Each event will include speakers, information on local resources, and opportunities to display flowers and vegetables from your gardens.



## People, Plants and Homes funds garden enhancements

To mark last year's thirtieth anniversary of the People, Plants and Homes program, a number of BC Housing sites throughout the province have received garden and/or landscaping enhancements. These projects provide new places for tenants to socialize and relax and will encourage more tenants to take up gardening and reap all its physical, mental and social benefits.

At Hall Tower 1 in Burnaby, tenants are now soaking up the sunshine from their new seating

area and arbour overlooking the garden beds. Tenants attended a brainstorming session and reached a consensus on their proposal. Four tenants worked on the steering committee and a tenant researched a number of plants suitable to grow up the arbour.

In Prince Rupert, Sunset Villa has a new soothing water feature. There have been many changes recently to this low-rise seniors' building including a building envelope restoration

and the conversion of the units to Seniors' Supportive Housing. The new fountain is part of an overall landscaping plan that includes new plants, a walkway and a seating area. The fountain will be dedicated to the memory of BC Housing Groundskeeper Mark Sorenson, who passed away in 2007. Mark loved gardening and it is fitting to remember him this way. Sunset Villa tenants will be advised of the dedication ceremony once a date is set.

Above left: The new seating area and arbour at Hall Tower 1 in Burnaby.

Left: The fountain at Sunset Villa will be dedicated to the memory of Mark Sorenson at a ceremony later this year.



# Fraser Region launches public housing recycling program

BC Housing tenants in our Fraser Region have taken an important step forward in making our planet greener. A region-wide recycling program has been implemented at all 15 sites.

“Tenants were asking for a recycling program,” explained Property Portfolio Manager Alison Silgado. “Five or six sites were already recycling, but we’ve now formalized the program and are implementing it across the region.”

Tenants are now able to recycle mixed paper, newspapers, cardboard, mixed containers, and electronics. A special brochure which uses images rather than words was created to explain how the program works.

The program was officially launched March 18 at Doug Drummond Manor in Burnaby in recognition of their tenants’ efforts to have a recycling program implemented. “We’ve been asking for this for a long time and it’s great to see it happen,” said Jim Shannon, President, Doug Drummond Tenant Association. “With the way the environment is today, we really need to do our part to make things better.”



Doug Drummond tenant Shirley Black is thrilled to have recycling bins on site.



## A Wii bit of exercise!

Tenants at Sunset Towers in Vancouver are getting a real kick out of a Wii video game system provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association. Baseball, bowling, golf and tennis are regular events now and tenants love the extra physical exercise they are getting. Here Jerome Leroux demonstrates his Wii baseball pitching technique.

## Tenants staff resource centre at Grant McNeil

Residents at Grant McNeil in North Vancouver can access a special on-site resource centre staffed by two tenants. Shamira and Zahia hold open houses twice a week in a former suite. Residents come to have tea, chat and perhaps do some crafts or listen to special speakers, such as a visiting dental hygienist. Shamira and Zahia also provide referrals to other resources available to tenants on the North Shore, such as support services or employment centres.

The resource centre has become the distribution base on Fridays for bread donated by the local Cobs bakery; which is appreciated by many tenants. And, Shamira and Zahia recently started assisting with a health and wellness project designed to improve the overall health of everyone who lives at Grant McNeil.

The on-site resource centre opened in 2006 and has helped build a sense of community at the site.

## New no smoking regulations in effect

By now all tenants should be aware of the provincial government’s new Tobacco Control Act that went into effect on April 1, 2008. In accordance with these regulations, smoking outside can only take place at least three metres (10 feet) from public and workplace doorways, open windows or air intakes.

In addition, local government authorities can enact bylaws increasing these limits. The City of Vancouver has put in a more stringent bylaw on a recommendation from the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Within Vancouver city limits, smoking must take place at least six metres (20 feet) from public and workplace doorways, open windows and air intakes.

**Please also note that all areas that were no-smoking zones before April 1 remain no-smoking zones.**

Please check with your Building Manager for site-specific regulations.





## Important Dates to Remember

- ▶ Victoria Garden Party – Thursday, August 21, 6 - 8:30 p.m.; Cadboro Dining Room, University of Victoria
- ▶ Fraser Region Adult and Seniors Buildings' Garden Party – Thursday, August 14, 1 - 4 p.m.; Floral Hall, VanDusen Gardens, Vancouver
- ▶ Vancouver Coastal Region Adult and Seniors Buildings' Garden Party – Friday, August 15, 1 - 4 p.m.; Floral Hall, VanDusen Gardens, Vancouver
- ▶ Metro Vancouver Family Fall Fair – Saturday, August 30, 1 - 3:30 p.m.; Recreation Hall, Culloden Court, Vancouver
- ▶ Applications for Special Event Funding for Tenant Activity Grants: available throughout the year.

Contact your Building Manager or Site Rep for more information about any of these programs.

## Tenant Tips

### Ways to be a good neighbour

- Respect each other: young and old and every age in between.
- Don't use foul or abusive language.
- Don't threaten other residents.
- Dispose of your garbage appropriately and don't litter.
- Keep your area clean and presentable; don't damage property or write graffiti.
- Drive cars and ride bikes in a considerate manner, taking care and paying attention to the safety of others.
- Be tolerant of children's need to play and of other people's need for quiet time.
- Make sure your children play in appropriate areas.
- Don't play loud music and turn it down if asked.
- Respect and support minority and vulnerable groups.
- Ensure that pets are kept under control and do not cause a nuisance to other tenants.
- Avoid unnecessary noise, particularly late at night and early in the morning.
- Ask your friends and relatives to follow these tips when visiting you.

## Safety First!



### Food storage over summer

With warmer weather comes the need to take more care to keep food safe to eat. Temperature control is the most important factor in preventing food poisoning and keeping food fresh. With hotter days also come more insects, such as flies and wasps, which can also compromise the safety of your food.

Over summer, cold foods tend to become warmer quicker and hot foods take longer to cool. Here are some tips to help maintain food safety and freshness over the coming months.

- Opening and closing your fridge and/or freezer often and overfilling these puts a strain on them and can affect how well they work.
- When preparing food, take ingredients from the fridge only as you need them.
- Put your groceries into the fridge or freezer as soon as you can after buying them.
- Thaw meat and fish in the fridge... not on the counter.
- Refrigerate leftovers immediately and be sure to reheat them properly before eating them.
- Insect proof your doors and windows.
- Keep your yard area tidy so as not to attract more insects.
- Remove your garbage frequently in order to reduce the smells of food waste.

## BC Housing Contact Information

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

We welcome your feedback and inquiries.

**BC Housing Home Office**  
1701 – 4555 Kingsway  
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4V8  
Fax: 604-433-3295

### Editorial Board Members

Donna Cairns, Dominic Flanagan, Joyce Fitz-Gibbon, Jill Lunde, Pamela Reddy, Sairoz Sekhon, Nicholas Najda

### Editor

**Jill Lunde**  
glunde@bchousing.org  
604-439-4135

For questions relating to your development, please contact your Property Portfolio Manager.

For questions about BC Housing tenant programs and services, please contact:

**Joyce Fitz-Gibbon**  
Operations Program Coordinator  
jfitz-gibbon@bchousing.org  
604-439-4141

**Nicholas Najda**  
Community Developer  
nnajda@bchousing.org  
604-439-4153

**Pamela Reddy**  
Community Developer  
preddy@bchousing.org  
604-454-5431



BC Housing

BC Housing is the provincial agency that develops, manages and administers a wide range of subsidized housing options for those most in need in British Columbia.

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