



BC Housing

Tenant Newsletter

June 2005

# News FOR YOU

H O U S I N G    U P D A T E

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 1

## Message from the CEO



Shayne Ramsay, CEO

Welcome to the first issue of our revised tenant newsletter, *News for You*, which will now be published twice a year. Our aim is to keep you informed of BC Housing's programs and services as well as provide you with useful information such as tenant tips. We welcome your feedback.

We are working to improve the quality of life for our tenants by creating more partnerships with health authorities and other associations concerned about housing and health issues. In this newsletter, we look at some of the partnerships we are developing. There are examples of successful programs that have run for a number of years as well as pilot projects that we hope to establish at other developments over the next few years.

The annual gardening parties are some of my favourite events during the year. I look forward to seeing many of you there and at other celebrations over the coming months.

Regards,



Shayne Ramsay (right) presenting an award to Muriel Harder at one of the 2004 Gardening Parties.

## Gardens on the Grow



The People, Plants and Homes program is off to a great start this year. Over 1,400 plant orders were received and tenants are now busy tending their gardens. This unique program encourages you to beautify your home with flowers and provide yourself with fresh garden produce. Free bedding plants and fertilizer are provided each spring and workshops are offered on a variety of topics.

"The purpose of the program is to promote physical and mental well-being," says Joyce Fitz-Gibbon, Program Coordinator. "There are many benefits to gardening and it's something that anyone can do, no matter their age, abilities or culture. It creates a wonderful sense of community."

To find out more about participating in the People, Plants and Homes program, contact your Building Manager or Joyce Fitz-Gibbon (604-439-4141).

### Garden Competitions

Tenants in the Lower Mainland and Victoria can enter their gardens in the annual competition. Details have been distributed recently and the deadline to enter is June 29. Mark your calendars for the Garden Party in your neighbourhood!

**August 11** – Victoria participants: University of Victoria

**August 18** – Lower Mainland East seniors: VanDusen Botanical Garden

**August 19** – Lower Mainland West seniors: VanDusen Botanical Garden

**August 20** – Lower Mainland families: Orchard Park

### Benefits of Gardening

Studies show that regular physical activity makes you a healthier person, and gardening is just one of the many activities that can help you get more active.

#### Gardening also:

- helps you feel better physically and emotionally;
- provides a form of emotional expression;
- helps people connect with others;
- takes you outside in the fresh air and sunshine;
- stimulates your senses as well as your memories.

Left: Gordon and Ella Allen show off their balcony garden at Steeves Manor in Vancouver.



Right: Andrea Espanola of Hall Tower II in Burnaby in front of her garden.



# Public Housing Advisory Council Message

Sharon Mohamed, Chair



Members of the  
Public Housing  
Advisory Council.

Your Public Housing Advisory Council is a volunteer group of elected tenant representatives from across the province. We work with BC Housing to enhance the well-being of tenant communities. I encourage you to get involved and make a difference.

Current council members are myself (Vancouver), Peter Bartlett (Vancouver), Ken Best (Burnaby), Janet Bording (Victoria), Mohana Fiddler (Victoria), Pat Georgeson (Terrace), Dennis Hawn (Surrey), Loree Nicholson (Surrey), Rosie Shandil (Vancouver), George Stickle (Aldergrove) and Betty Turner (Burnaby).

You can reach the council at [phac@bchousing.org](mailto:phac@bchousing.org) or by calling 604-439-8572 or toll free at 1-800-257-7756 (ext. 8572).

## STEP to work

BC Housing offers a job training program for young tenants in its Lower Mainland developments who are looking for their first job experience. The Student Tenant Employment Program (STEP) enables youth ages 15 to 18 to gain valuable training and prepares them to enter the workforce.

This summer 36 youth are taking part in the program, which is being delivered in partnership with the Downtown Vancouver YMCA. Participants are receiving specialized employment training and certifications while earning money.

STEP offers more than just a job. It gives youth a chance to explore new ideas, set goals and succeed. Many of the program's 374 graduates have gone on to successful careers in a wide variety of fields.

If you are interested in knowing more about the program or applying next year, please contact your Building Manager or Joyce Fitz-Gibbon, Program Coordinator (604-439-4141).

## Maclean Park mentorship pilot project

Fifteen teenagers from Maclean Park in Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood have been recruited to participate in a mentorship program this summer. The program is funded by BC Housing, the YWCA of Vancouver and the McCreary Youth Foundation. Maclean Park was chosen for this pilot project because of the large number of youth on site. The goal of the program is to provide opportunities for fun, positive activities over the summer and to introduce the concept of mentorship at an age when positive role models are especially important.

The Maclean Park participants have been matched with mentors

who share similar backgrounds and common interests. The groups are working on projects that will benefit families living at the development.

A mentor is someone who acts as a guide or advisor to a younger person. Youth who participate in mentorship programs do better in school, are less likely to engage in unhealthy activities, and have better communication and interpersonal skills.

If this summer's pilot project is successful, it may be offered at Maclean Park in future years as well as possibly being expanded to other developments.

## Create community spirit with Tenant Activity Grants

Bus trips, movie nights, community kitchens, seasonal parties and after-school programs all help build a sense of community. They are also examples of the type of activities eligible for BC Housing's Tenant Activity Grants.

This is a great opportunity for you and a group of your neighbours to plan a special event for your development. Planning a summer barbecue, a Halloween party or a Christmas event contributes to your quality of life while allowing you to develop important organizational and social skills.

Talk to your Property Portfolio Manager or a Community Development Officer for details on how you can get involved.



Bicycle and road safety was part of Champlain Place's 2004 Fun Day event.



Children lined up for the dunk tank at Little Mountain's 50th anniversary celebration in 2004.



Ingrid Steenhuisen and Richard Larmour helped organize Little Mountain's anniversary event.



# Get cooking with a meal program at your development

A number of public housing developments participate in meal programs that provide residents with hot lunches once a week at an affordable price. The programs vary depending on who organizes and delivers them.

Quest Outreach Society services meal programs at Steeves Manor in Vancouver and at Stratford Gardens and Hall Tower 1 in Burnaby. Greenbrook in Surrey and Ross Tower in New Westminster have community kitchens. Rosewood Towers in Richmond receives meals from Rose Manor. And, Doug Drummond in Burnaby and Sunset Towers and Grandview Terrace in Vancouver organize their meal programs with resident volunteers on site. In May of this year, Skeena Terrace in Vancouver also started a meal program.

All meal programs are well attended by residents and work especially well in buildings where a large number of tenants are elderly or single disabled people who cannot easily cook a nutritious meal on their own. Many of the programs are successful because of the dedicated volunteers who help out.

If you think a meal program would work well at your development, contact your Property Portfolio Manager to inquire about how to start one.



Laurelynn resident Bill Chienki is a volunteer cook who helps prepare hot meals for residents at Grandview Terrace.



Shirley Johannesson gets ready to dig in to a delicious hot meal at Grandview Terrace.

## The Resource Centre at Steeves Manor



Steeves Manor resident Josephine models fashions from the local thrift store at a recent fashion show while fellow residents look on.

Steeves Manor, a 200-suite development for seniors and young disabled people in Vancouver, has been the test site for a resource centre for the past year. The centre, which is a partnership between BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Community Home Support Services Association, was created to promote and support the quality of life and independence of all residents at Steeves Manor by providing support, information and linkages to community resources, and by facilitating social and recreational activities to meet tenants' needs.

Community Resource Facilitator Liz Neal organizes a range of activities such as meal programs, exercise classes, health programs, income tax clinics, entertainment programs and in partnership with the Steeves Manor Tenant Association, a popular computer program where residents can set up e-mail accounts. There are other activities run by residents themselves through the tenant association and a "Wellness Group" such as bingo, arts and crafts, a store, and a fruit and vegetable program.

Steeves Manor residents benefit from these varied programs that all promote health and well-being. The Resource Centre is an example of an innovative project that is taking a holistic approach to providing care and recognizing how partnerships between housing and health providers can better meet the needs of public housing residents.

## BC Housing awards bursaries to tenants

Every year BC Housing awards 46 bursaries and the Margaret Mitchell Outstanding Achievement Award to tenants living in subsidized housing. The program encourages residents between the ages of 17 and 64 to pursue educational goals and can be used towards post-secondary education including training programs. The \$750 awards may be used for tuition and other school-related expenses.

This year, a selection committee with members from BC Housing, the Public Housing Advisory Council and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association reviewed about 150 bursary applications and 20 Margaret Mitchell Award applications. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to the following public housing bursary recipients.

- **Gavanant Alobu**, Stamps Place, Vancouver
- **Lisa Bailey**, Westwood Court, Prince George
- **Bun Thong (Raymond) Chhon**, Stamps Place, Vancouver Margaret Mitchell Award Winner
- **Yuan (Merry) Gong**, Stamps Place, Vancouver
- **Ngai In (Ginny) Ho**, Maclean Park, Vancouver
- **Brandy Kane**, Hall Tower I, Burnaby
- **Amy ManyGuns**, Killarney Gardens, Vancouver
- **Shelley McGrath**, Bay View, Victoria
- **Sarika Narinesingh**, Comox Street, Vancouver
- **Daisy Nelson**, Mount Pleasant, Vancouver
- **Judith Saligumba**, Brant Villa, Vancouver
- **Serita Valero**, Skeena Terrace, Vancouver

Residents interested in applying next year are encouraged to contact their site rep or Community Development Officer for more information.



# Around the Province

Listed here are some dates to remember and programs you may be eligible for.

	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Welcome Back to the Garden Party, Doug Drummond, Burnaby	15					
Tenant Activity Grants applications						
Student Tenant Employment Program underway						
Garden Competition: Victoria Party, University of Victoria		11				
Garden Competition: LME Seniors, VanDusen Botanical Garden		18				
Garden Competition: LMW Seniors, VanDusen Botanical Garden		19				
Garden Competition: Lower Mainland families: Orchard Park		20				

If your development is planning an event that you would like listed in the next issue of *News For You*, please send the information to the editor for consideration: [glunde@bchousing.org](mailto:glunde@bchousing.org). The next issue will cover the months of December 2005 to June 2006. The deadline for inclusion in the calendar is October 15, 2005.

## Tenant Tips

- ▶ Remember that you and your children need sun screen with a sun protection factor of 15 or greater any time you are out enjoying the sunshine. This protects you from harmful rays that can cause cancer.
- ▶ Working in the garden? Great. Here are some tips to help make it a pleasant experience:
  - Take stretching breaks throughout the time you spend gardening.
  - Don't hold the same position for too long. Move around and shake out your muscles.
  - Don't lift objects that are too heavy.
  - When lifting, bend from your knees and keep your back straight.
  - The plants aren't the only things that need water! Take a drink before, during and after your gardening work.
- ▶ Keeping your house a home:
  - It's easy to remove crayon marks from walls by dipping a damp rag in baking soda and rubbing it off.
  - To remove permanent marker from appliances or counter tops, rub the marks with a white eraser or rubbing alcohol on paper towel.
  - Drying out the shower after the last person uses it reduces cleaning requirements and the risk of mould in your home.
  - Leaving a bathroom window open a crack while showering reduces moisture build up and the risk of mould in your home.



## Safety First!



Protect yourself and your home. Don't let strangers follow you into the building as you enter. Visitors can use the intercom to call their friends or family. When you receive a call on the intercom, never let someone in if you don't know them.

Only let workers into your building or your suite if you know they should be there (for example, notices have been posted) and they have proper identification.

If you see suspicious strangers around the building, please contact your Building Manager or the police. If you see suspected criminal activity, do not attempt to intervene. Call the police immediately.

## BC Housing Contact Information

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

We welcome your feedback and inquiries.

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BC Housing

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