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BC Housing

Tenant Newsletter  
June 2006

# News FOR YOU

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

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

## Message from the CEO



Shayne Ramsay, CEO

One of the things that I am most proud of at BC Housing is the growth in the number of programs we are offering you, our tenants. As you will read in this issue of your newsletter, we are working with more partners, including the health authorities, BC Hydro, and the Vancouver Public Library, to offer you more services.

We are always pleased by the excellent response we get to our People, Plants and Homes program. Good luck to all the tenants participating in this year's gardening competitions and I look forward to seeing many of you at our gardening parties in August.

Finally, on a sad note, on behalf of all of us at BC Housing, I would like to extend our sympathies to all those who were affected by the tragic fire in May at one of our Vancouver developments, Skeena Terrace. Our staff worked hard to provide support and assistance to tenants during this difficult time. It reminded us how much we care about our tenants and what we can achieve if we work together.

Regards,

Two of the gardens from last year's People, Plants and Homes competition.



## Story time at Vancouver sites

The Vancouver Public Library's children's outreach librarians are visiting several BC Housing sites for free story time sessions with tenants and their young children. All caregivers with children from infants to five years old are welcome to drop in for stories, rhymes, puppet shows, crafts and healthy snacks.



Children's outreach librarian Kristy Hennings presents story time sessions at Champlain Place and Culloden Court.

"We're keeping the sessions as flexible as possible," said Kristy Hennings, one of the Vancouver Public Library's children's outreach librarians. "If one site has lots of toddlers, we'll do activities suitable for that age group; if there are lots of preschoolers at another site, we'll do a slightly different program for them."

The sessions demonstrate that language is fun and give caregivers tools to interact with their children in positive ways. "We hope that our presentations spark interest in books and reading," said Kristy, "and that they also give children and parents a chance to meet other families at their developments."

Tenants who attend the sessions are positive about the presentations. Often library programs fill quickly and can be difficult to find space in. With these sessions, the librarians come right to BC Housing developments and there is always space available.

## Once upon a time...

Story time sessions are offered weekly at these Vancouver sites:

Champlain Place  
Culloden Court  
Grandview Terrace  
Little Mountain  
Stamps Place

Story time starts this summer at:

MacLean Park  
Orchard Park  
Skeena Terrace

*Check with your Building Manager for the day and time at your site.*

# Public Housing Advisory Council Message

Sharon Mohamed, Chair



Sharon Mohamed

Your Public Housing Advisory Council is a group of elected tenant representatives from across the province. We are currently looking into different models to find one that will serve you better. Throughout the province there are many tenant groups and associations whose members also volunteer their time. I thank you all for your dedication and encourage you to keep working to improve the lives of your friends and neighbours. Volunteers know that they get as much out of volunteering as they put in.

As a single mom, I know I couldn't raise my children without the help of public housing. I feel truly blessed to live where I do and to have

the opportunity to know so many of my fellow tenants. I am sure many of you feel the same way.

On behalf of the Public Housing Advisory Council, I want to express my sadness at the tragic loss of five lives in the recent fire at Skeena Terrace. Adela Etibako and her children lived in the same development as me and we are all still recovering from the shock of their terrible loss. Our thanks to the Vancouver Fire Department, the Vancouver Police Department, Victim Services, Thunderbird Community Centre, the Salvation Army and the many staff at BC Housing who helped us during this difficult time.

## Lighting the way to energy savings

Tenants at our larger sites in the Lower Mainland benefited from a recent generous donation of 30,000 compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs from BC Hydro. These bulbs were delivered to Greater Vancouver developments and a staff person from BC Hydro gave instructions to staff and tenants on where to install them to achieve the greatest energy savings, while avoiding areas that may not be appropriate. The bulbs were installed in common areas as well as in tenants' suites.

CFL bulbs use up to 75 per cent less electricity and last up to eight times longer than standard incandescent bulbs. Up to



BC Hydro donated 30,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs to public housing sites in the Lower Mainland earlier this year.

\$25 in electricity and replacement costs can be saved over the life of every CFL bulb installed.

BC Housing is working to reduce energy consumption in other ways at our public housing developments. A pilot project is underway at five sites in Vancouver and Burnaby, where energy-efficient boilers, hot water heaters, control systems and lighting are being installed.

Reduce your energy consumption – and your utility bill! Here are some simple ways that you can “go green” in your home:

- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Use energy-saving light bulbs.
- Unplug electronic devices and re-chargers when not in use.
- Plug the sink or rinse dishes in a dishpan or clean rinse water rather than under hot running water.
- Report leaky taps and toilets to your Building Manager.
- Use cold water to wash clothes.
- Use curtains to keep the sun out on hot summer days and to keep the cold out during cold winter nights.

## Health Services Coordinators now in every region



Above: Theresa Castro (left) and Lynda Bowes are BC Housing's Health Services Coordinators in the Lower Mainland East Region.

Right: The Health Services Coordinators in the Lower Mainland West Region are (left to right) Gisele Bernier, Julie Wurdemann, and Mike Shieh.

Tenants in all regions can now access the services of BC Housing Health Services Coordinators. “The coordinators are health care professionals (nurses and social workers) who assist tenants in maintaining their health and housing,” said Gail Burak, Manager, Health Services.



Tenants who are experiencing life crises or personal difficulties can contact a Health Services Coordinator. At times, tenants are referred by their Building Manager or Property Portfolio Manager. The Health Services Coordinator will speak with the tenant to determine what sort of assistance is needed. They then make a referral to the appropriate community agency or resource.

If you would like to get in touch with a Health Services Coordinator in your region, contact your Building Manager/Site Rep or Property Portfolio Manager or call your regional office and ask to speak with one:

Lower Mainland West Regional Office: 604-609-7024  
Lower Mainland East Regional Office: 604-525-3033  
Vancouver Island Regional Office: 250-475-7550  
Interior Regional Office: 250-493-0301  
Northern Regional Office: 250-562-9251



# Tenants celebrate 30 years of Bauer Villa

Tenants, guests and BC Housing staff recently attended the 30th anniversary of Bauer Villa, a public housing site in Vancouver.

One of the development's tenants, Dorothy May, was crucial in getting Bauer Villa off the ground. In the early seventies, Dorothy and a group of 20 enthusiastic women met twice a week to plan, inspire and convince city hall of the need for social housing for single women in Vancouver. This group, known as the Committee on Housing for Single Women, fought for social housing – something that did not exist for single women at the time. These women all shared three common characteristics: they were all single; in their middle or later years; and lived on limited income. The group met twice a week for five years before Bauer Villa was built.

Their dreams were realized when Bauer Villa opened on May 1, 1976 as an affordable housing development for single women over the age of 45. The women were involved entirely throughout

the planning and designing of the building.

“Dorothy feels grateful and I feel blessed to live at Bauer Villa – Dorothy for 30 years and myself 17 years next September,” said tenant Jean Whitred. “Safe, affordable, clean, quality housing in a nice neighbourhood, close to shops and public transportation and a small park... this is surely as good as it gets.”

At the anniversary celebration, BC Housing Community Developer Sue Noga spoke on Dorothy's behalf, relating the story of the fight for social housing for women. The afternoon concluded with a cake-cutting ceremony. Tenants and guests thoroughly enjoyed the celebration. Dorothy was extremely pleased and eager to comment. “Thirty years of hard work has finally paid off,” she said.



Above: Property Portfolio Manager Jody Puff (left) assists resident Dorothy May as she cuts the celebratory cake.



Left: Tenant Dorothy May was instrumental in getting Bauer Villa off the ground.

*Editor's note: The Bauer Villa anniversary celebration was funded by a Tenant Activity Grant. If you have an idea for an event that would build community spirit at your development, talk to your Property Portfolio Manager or a Community Developer about applying for funding.*

# Skeena Terrace tenant runs on-site youth program



Above: Skeena Terrace youth participating in the program include (left to right) Josh Hedley, Kiefer Gladue, Barbara Gladue, Anthony McGregor, leader Jason Datt, Dwayne Boris Corona, and Jimmy Caranza.



Right: Youth program leader Jason Datt with Neil Datt and Josh Hedley.

Twenty-five-year-old Jason Datt is a long-time resident at Skeena Terrace in Vancouver (the site of the recent tragic fire) and a recognizable face to most tenants there. He's a person teens feel comfortable with and a natural leader for the development's youth program.

“We get together two days a week,” said Jason. “We have a dinner and movie night where we cook calzones, sushi, perogies... stuff that you can make on a budget. We go on trips. And I try to provide resources on drug awareness, preparing for driving license tests... things that are helpful to teens.”

The goal of the program is to engage youth in the community between the ages of 12 and 18. Kathy Zazulyk, who runs other programs at Skeena Terrace, recommended Jason for the job. “Jason is a great community asset,” she said. “We have an all-age drop-in program but it wasn't drawing the teens, especially those who were isolated. In a few months, Jason has created a program that's interesting for them.”

Jason also works as a youth leader at nearby Thunderbird Community Centre. He is currently taking online courses from Simon Fraser University and Kamloops College to work towards a certificate in social work.

# Regional boundaries adjusted

BC Housing recently adjusted the boundary divisions of its Lower Mainland West and Lower Mainland East regional offices. All developments in Vancouver are now part of the Lower Mainland West region. This affects nine of our sites that are situated between Knight Street and Boundary Street. This change brings the regions into better alignment with the local health authorities and other social ministries such as the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The change will allow us to work more effectively with these partners in delivering programs to tenants.

For the tenants who live in the area that is changing, we thank you for your patience. Most of you will not notice any difference beyond where you now go to pay your rent and where you will direct any correspondence.



## Important Dates to Remember

- Deadline for entering the Lower Mainland and Victoria gardening competitions: June 28
- Victoria garden competition judging: July 19 and 20
- Lower Mainland seniors garden competition judging: July 10 – 14
- Lower Mainland families garden competition judging: July 24 – 28
- Victoria Garden Party: August 10, 6 to 8:30 p.m., University of Victoria
- Lower Mainland East Seniors Garden Party: August 17, 1 to 3:30 p.m., VanDusen Botanical Garden Floral Hall
- Lower Mainland West Seniors Garden Party: August 18, 1 to 3:30 p.m., VanDusen Botanical Garden Floral Hall
- Lower Mainland Families Garden Party: August 19, 1 to 3:30 p.m., Orchard Park
- Applications for Special Event Funding for Tenant Activity Grants: available throughout the year.

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

## Tenant Tips

### Healthy Eating

Healthy eating plus active living equals a healthy lifestyle. And, what better time of year to resolve to eat better than in the summer when fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful?

Here are some tips to get you going.

- By eating five servings of fruits and veggies daily, you decrease your risk of cancer by one-third over those who eat one or two servings.
- Cook extra vegetables at dinner and use them as tasty leftovers for lunch the next day.
- Add fruit to your breakfast cereal or supper salad.
- Apples, cherries, blueberries and many other fruits make great grab-and-go snacks.
- Broccoli, carrots, tomatoes and many other veggies are a great addition to a summer picnic.
- You can grow a variety of vegetables in containers on your balcony or patio.
- Community gardens are a great place to grow fresh food. If there isn't one at your development, look for opportunities in your neighbourhood.



## Safety First!

Are you prepared in the event of an emergency such as a major earthquake? Here are some ideas we encourage all tenants to adopt to help you prepare for such a crisis.

- 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.
- 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.

## 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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