



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 22nd, 2009

COWICHAN CHILD CARE COUNCIL

In 2007, Social Planning Cowichan responded to community concern regarding the lack of childcare for families in the Cowichan Region and became actively involved.

Following 4 months of research, the *Child Care in the Cowichan Valley Region* report was published, identifying the 3 main barriers for the lack of child care in the Region:

- Lack of child care spaces
- Funding for child care services and programs
- Staff training, recruitment and retention in birth to three year services

The report confirmed the community's concerns and labeled it a child care crisis.

Social Planning Cowichan established a Regional Child Care Task Force to make recommendations to address this crisis. Under the direction of Co-Chairs Ian Kalina and Candace Spilsbury, the Task Force was able to increase the awareness of the importance of quality, affordable accessible child care locally and provincially by meeting with Minister Reid and to increase the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) training opportunities in Cowichan by collaborating with Vancouver Island University. "Thanks to the collaboration efforts in our community, new initiatives for training and recruitment of Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) have been developed. Now the Council will need to strengthen its message to the provincial government regarding adequate funding for quality child care for our children." Says Candace Spilsbury, Co-Chair, Cowichan Child Care Council.

While much has been achieved in raising awareness and increasing training opportunities here in Cowichan, the continued critical lack of licensed child care spaces and our inability to attract and retain qualified Early Childhood Educators indicates that there is still more work to be done. Members of Social Planning Cowichan's Regional Childcare Task Force voted unanimously on May 26th, 2009 to establish a Cowichan Child Care Council to continue the work begun by the Task Force. The Community Child Care Council is a model that can be found in other BC communities. The initial work of the Council will be to strengthen the Island network of Child Care Councils so that communities working together can resolve the crisis in childcare.

Interested members of the community are invited to join the Council by contacting either of the Co-Chairs, Ian Kalina or Candace Spilsbury at 250.746.1004 ext.250

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Media contacts:

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