

Social Planning Cowichan

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News for January 2010



Message from Valerie Nicol, Board Chair

As we reflect on the past year, it has certainly been a busy time for Social Planning Cowichan. Our offices on Third Street have been humming with various community projects all focused on improving the quality of life for many people living in the Cowichan Region.

2009 closes with the opening of Warmland House on December 15th. Social Planning worked with BC Housing (funders of the project) to secure the land and to head up an initial project team. Once this was done, the initiative was turned over to Canadian Mental Health (Cowichan Branch) who saw to the actual construction of the building and the activities and programming.

With our changing economic climate coupled with a steady growth in population, the need to identify and respond quickly to social issues is becoming more important. This includes such things as quality child care, affordable housing, employment and the environment. Our second Status of the Community Report will be ready in a few months.

From a community social service perspective, these are indeed challenging times. Funding is tight and resources are limited here at home and throughout BC. We are fortunate to have highly skilled staff and research assistants. We are also blessed to have a board comprised of people with dedication, a range of skills and community experience. We can face 2010 confidently.

In the coming year, we look forward to the opportunity of working together with other organizations in the Cowichan Valley. By forging relationships and mobilizing our efforts and strengths we will be better situated to face the coming years.

On behalf of the board I would like to wish you and your family a satisfying and happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Valerie Nicol
SPC Board Chair

Latest on the Status of the Community Report (Two)



Project coordinator **Linden Collette** and research assistants **Allison Conway (above left)** and **Miranda Roger (above middle)** have been busy attending community poster forums sharing information from the report with community members. They have also been receiving feedback on key issues of concern.

The Status of the Community Report looks at several quality of life indicators including arts and culture, community involvement, economy and employment, education, food security, health, community and social services, housing and the built environment, natural environment, public safety and transportation. The first report was produced in 2006.

Forums for the second Status of the Community report will continue until December 12, 2009. "At that point we will focus on writing the report and developing the next steps. We have also been conducting further research on housing in the south Cowichan region. This information will inform the CVRD Planning Department for the Official Community Plan process," Linden said.



Linden Collette (left) discusses the posters with Cowichan Bay Director Lori Iannidinardo (middle) and Geoff Whitney Brown.

Cowichan Men's Resource Centre Fills a Vital Need

The **Cowichan Men's Resource Centre** is all about helping men to be caring individuals, responsible fathers and contributing members of their communities. It offers a place for men to gather to foster independence, to live with honesty, integrity and to develop positive relationships.

The centre offers a wide range of supports such as counselling, help to foster healthy relationships, communications skills, and helping men with court proceedings including divorce, separation and child custody issues.

The organization started holding meetings in 2004 in the basement of the Silverfern Medical Centre. Community organizations including Cowichan Women Against Violence, Cowichan Family Life, RCMP and Canadian Mental Health have all given enthusiastic support to the Men's Resource Centre.

In 2009, funding was secured to undertake an analysis of the needs and wants of the community around men and their families. Executive Director Grant Waldman has considerable experience developing men's groups in other parts of Canada. He is joined by Joe Barton, Lana Pagduan and Doug Dame.

Currently, the Cowichan Men's Resource Centre is on the look out for mentors to provide positive role models for young men between the ages of 12 to 18 years of age. The objective is to help adolescent males grow into strong healthy men with a sense of inner purpose and direction. The program involves group mentoring, taking part in a variety of activities from group discussions to paint ball and wilderness hikes.

The centre is located upstairs at **3 - 55 Station Street** in Duncan. For more information, please call **250-597-2801**.

Social Planning Cowichan Board Members

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Vice Chair

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Social Planning Welcomes Aboard Geri Sera

Geri Sera recently joined Social Planning as the new Regional Affordable Housing Strategy Project Coordinator. In her new role Geri works with two research assistants and a volunteer Affordable Housing Directorate. The objective is to produce plans and strategies to stimulate much needed affordable housing in the Cowichan Region. Funding for this one-year project has been provided by the Federal Government.

Prior to joining Social Planning, Geri worked with the Nanaimo Unique Kids Organization, the Nanaimo Addiction Foundation, Volunteer Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Family Life Association. She also worked with health regions in Alberta during the shift to regional services. She was instrumental in forming six foundations from the Crowsnest Pass to Taber, Alberta. Geri has also worked as a journalist, most recently with the Vancouver Island Business Examiner.

“Ensuring communities have a diverse affordable housing base to support local residents is a true challenge in our shifting economy. I am looking forward to working with regional groups and individuals to see that these needs are met,” she said. Geri can be reached at 250-746-1004.

Seniors' Guidance Directory

A Seniors' Guidance Directory that includes a listing of seniors programs and services in Cowichan is now available. For more information please contact the Cowichan Seniors Care Foundation at 250-715-6481 or www.cowichanseniors.ca or cscfoundatio@shaw.ca.

Joint Community Forum and Collaborative Community Discussion

The Cowichan Green Community's Food Security Mapping Project and Social Planning Cowichan's Status of the Community Report would like to invite you to a Joint Community Forum and Collaborative Community Discussion

Tuesday January 12th, 2010

5:00pm -7:30pm

St. John's Anglican Church Hall

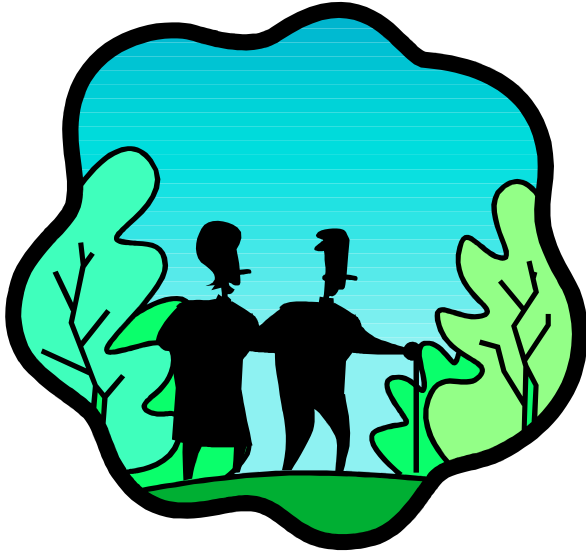
486 Jubilee Street, Duncan

Appetizers and light refreshments provided

Please RSVP by Wednesday January 6th, 2010

to Social Planning Cowichan, (250) 746-1004 Ext 260 or

research2@socialplanningcowichan.org



Duncan Age-Friendly Seniors' Safety Community Project Underway

The Age-Friendly Seniors' Safety project funded through the Union of BC Municipalities to improve the safety and well-being of seniors in Duncan. It is based on standards developed by the World Health Organization and the Cowichan Region Safety Lens (Safer Futures).

The objective of the project is to carry out recommendations of the 2007 Duncan Official Community Plan (OCP) that specifically relate to seniors safety. This includes identifying gaps in services for seniors; addressing safety issues around crime, victimization and fear; recreational opportunities and participation in the local decision-making process.

A steering committee made up of representatives of local seniors' organizations is headed up by Pam Alcorn, a freelance community development facilitator. The project, which started in October, will finish in February 2010.

About Social Planning Cowichan

Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) is a registered society founded in May 2004 to provide leadership that brings the community together to create a sustainable quality of life for everyone in the Cowichan Region.

Our Mandate is:

- To conduct research about the social health of the Cowichan Region
- To educate and inform the Cowichan Region community about social planning issues
- To facilitate partnerships and community consensus on issues and action plans
- To recommend action plans and short and long term strategies to improve the quality of life in the Cowichan Region



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