

# Social Planning Cowichan

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## News for June 2010



### Message from Valerie Nicol, Board Chair

It has certainly been a busy few months at Social Planning Cowichan (SPC). Executive Director Michelle Nowzek is away for the summer completing her Bachelor of Social Work practicum with Cowichan Tribes. Linden Collette is filling in for Michelle until the fall. We miss Michelle, but we're delighted that Linden was able to take over the helm. Having recently completed the Status of the Community Report (II), Linden has an excellent grasp of the issues and challenges that face the Cowichan Region.

Geri Sera, Miranda Rogers and Scott Heggie are continuing their work with the Affordable Housing Strategy. A recent slate of media stories and several community workshops have generated considerable interest in the need for affordable housing. We have moved forward to the point where we are working with local government toward some short term solutions.

As well as affordable housing, affordable quality day care remains a top priority. A questionnaire will soon be distributed to families in need of child care and child care providers. This information will be sent to the media so we can generate more community awareness.

What does it cost to live in the Cowichan Region? The Cowichan Living Wage project will soon provide the information. This is a three-month project. The objective is to calculate the living wage for the Cowichan Region using the Working for a Living Wage Calculation Guide created by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

As you may know, the role of SPC is to create broad community awareness of these issues, to provide a foundation of current information so that change can be realized.

While we have a dedicated and knowledgeable SPC team, we are on the lookout for more board members. If issues like affordable housing, quality public daycare and poverty interest you please consider joining our board. We would love to hear from you.

In closing, I would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy summer.

**Valerie Nicol, Board Chair**

### Non-Profit Questionnaire

The last Provincial budget saw significant funding cutbacks for many social service agencies. As a result, Social Planning Cowichan and Volunteer Cowichan have put together a survey to get a better understanding of the implications for the Cowichan Region. The questionnaire asks social service agencies about the impact these cutbacks have on their ability to provide services. It will also gather information on the steps agencies have taken to adapt to reduced funding e.g., eliminating programs, acquiring new funding sources. For more information, please call Linden Collette 250-746-1004.

## Affordable Housing Update

The past few months have been busy for the affordable Housing Directorate. Highlights include a media campaign to increase awareness of the need for more affordable housing and meetings with key individuals and groups concerning housing policy directions and priorities.

The group has also developed a housing questionnaire. For more information please call Geri Sera, Regional Affordable Housing Strategy Project Coordinator 250-746-1004.

## Success By 6 Hosts Community Conversation

*Raising successful kids takes more than just a single family or school; it takes an entire community.* With this in mind, Success By 6 hosted a community meeting on Wednesday June 9 at the Clements Centre.

The objective was to bring together people interested in developing a plan to encourage the emotional and social development of children in the Cowichan Region.

More than 35 community members came together to support an initiative to leverage seed money from Success By 6 for a community-wide plan to build a solid foundation for the social and emotional health and well-being of young children and their families.

In a series of conversations, people who attended were asked their thoughts on the most important issues for children 0 to six years; what needs to happen for the community to come together; and what initiatives can be supported to leverage funds for a community-wide plan.

“The conversations were rich and enlightening,” said Cindy Lise, Success by 6 coordinator. Issues such as poverty, basic needs, and influences of television and technology negatively impacting children, connections to community, transportation and consistent funding were among the topics discussed.

The compiled information will go back to the Success By 6 Community Investment Committee for recommendations for the allocation of seed funding.

## Aboriginal History Month Gets Underway

June 1 to 31, marks the First Annual Aboriginal History Month Celebration. Aboriginal History Month was acclaimed by the Canadian government by legislation introduced by Cowichan’s MP Jean Crowder.

Local non-profit organizations have teamed up with Social Planning Cowichan's (SPC) Cultural Connections Council to continue celebrating Aboriginal history and culture sparked by NAIG.

“During this special month people will have the opportunity to enjoy canoe races, Aboriginal arts, music, food, dance, artisan markets, workshops and Aboriginal films. Many activities will be free or by donation,” said Candace Spilsbury SPC board member and Co-chair of the Cultural Connections Council. “Most importantly, it will be an opportunity to learn more about our rich heritage in the Cowichan Valley and to forge important cultural connections,” she said.

For more information about the events please call Linden Collette 250-746-1004 ext. 250 or Candace Spilsbury 250-710-4959

## Goodbyes...

Founding board member **Joanna Winter** tendered her resignation recently. Joanna is the Manager of Administrative Services for the Town of Ladysmith – a very busy job.

Joanna was a leader in the community visioning process to champion social health in the Cowichan Region through a network of agencies and organizations. When Social Planning Cowichan was formed Joanna worked to establish the organization to build its credibility in the community. She served as an executive member and Director of Social Planning Cowichan for five years.

Thanks for your dedication and commitment over the years Joanna, we'll miss you!

**Dianne Wilbee**, who has worked enthusiastically for the Cultural Connections Council, is leaving us this summer. Dianne will continue to work with First Nations communities by providing foster care through Lalum’utul’ Smun’eem Child and Family Services.

## Social Planning Cowichan Board Members

Valerie Nicol  
Chair

Mark Buchanan  
Vice Chair

Veronica Scott  
Secretary

Debbie Williams  
Treasurer

Candace Spilsbury  
Past Chair

Pam Alcorn

Mike Coleman

Garrett Elliot

Gerry Giles

Ian Kalina

Gifty Serbeh-Dunn

## Introducing our summer students...



### Myles Dickson

Myles is collecting data in order to calculate the Living Wage for the Cowichan Region. He recently finished his first year at the University of Victoria where he is studying Social Sciences, likely major in psychology.

Myles grew up in Victoria and attended Brentwood College. "I am excited to work for Social Planning Cowichan to further understand the economic needs of the Region. I will be assisting to collect

and interpret data so we can better understand the specific economic needs of people living in the Cowichan Region. I am finding it very rewarding," he said.

### Kerstin Poirier

Kerstin is conducting child care surveys with care providers and parents this summer. She is in her third year at the Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo. She will be completing her Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in criminology when she returns to school next semester. "I applied for the social research position with SPC because I really enjoyed the research aspects in my university courses. I believe it will help me to understand and connect with the Cowichan Valley," she said.



## 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