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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## THE BURNABY COMMUNITY

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Burnaby is a diverse, and thriving community making it a great place to live, work, learn and play. With a population exceeding 216,000, Burnaby is the third largest urban city in B.C. Over 70 different languages are spoken in Burnaby and 51% of residents reported speaking a language other than English in their homes. Visible minorities make up 55% of the population, giving Burnaby the fourth highest proportion of visible minorities among cities in Canada. Burnaby is also an economically diverse community, with 22% of children and families living below the poverty line, and close to 39% of all Burnaby residents living in rental housing.

Burnaby's **Community Literacy Plan** and **District Literacy Plan** are complementary in their support for Burnaby learners. Each document reflects the personalization of the learner and the belief that "behind the face of every learner is a family, a community and a culture." Together, we strive to meet the needs of each learner in Burnaby.

Burnaby's **Community Literacy Plan** supports the school district in the development and implementation of the school district's literacy plan. The priorities contained in the Community Plan mirror the efforts of the school district to support immigrant families, English Language learners and Aboriginal learners.

**Changes observed about the community since doing the community plan.**

Several economic factors are influencing the community this year and have direct impact on the people in Burnaby.

- The downturn in the economy has resulted in higher unemployment. Community agencies report that their workers are seeing an increase in the number of families in distress and a rise in domestic violence.
- A marked increase in the cost of living has also increased financial pressures. Wages for workers have not increased and many now find the cost of basic food, housing and childcare beyond their income.
- Children in vulnerable populations are struggling in school due to pressures in the home, and in some cases may have inadequate nutrition.

The positive outcomes in the community include a heightened awareness and capacity between community organizations and groups to work together to increase lifelong and life wide literacy.

- The participation of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator in community agency meetings has raised the profile of literacy in the community.
- Members of the Burnaby Board of Trade are strong advocates of the importance of literacy in the workforce.
- The role literacy plays in society and its impact on individuals, community and the economy has been emphasized.

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#### BURNABY PLAN

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#### 1) Priorities & objectives and actions from our literacy plan that have been addressed this year.

- Program sustainability, literacy awareness & community capacity building
- Support for and enhancement of programs that provide effective services and intergenerational literacy and literacy for homeless, immigrant families, Aboriginal children, and youth
- Support for community-based multi-service hubs

We provided funding to eight community agencies to support literacy related activities using the following criteria:

- *Fit within Burnaby's Community Literacy Plan*
- *Served Burnaby residents*
- *Built community capacity*
- *Clearly outlined the anticipated impact of the project*
- *Complemented existing community resources (avoided duplication)*
- *Demonstrated the ability and experience of the agency to provide the service.*

Four of the projects funded will continue on with or without additional Literacy Now Burnaby funding. The remaining projects served as "incubators" and built capacity, and fueled attitudinal change. While the Individual projects were outlined in the 2009 report, a summary of outcomes follows:

- For youth (ages 6 to 12 middle years), the *Boys and Girls Club* added a focus on literacy to their programs and 120 children and youth participated. When surveyed 39% of Club members said that they read more since joining the Club, while 81% of their

parents/caregivers reported that their child now reads more since joining the club and participating in activities that included literacy. Since the primary program mandate is social recreation, the program goal was set at an increase of 25% to be reported by Club members and their parents.

- A pilot *ESL Reading Circle for Adults* took place at South Burnaby Neighbourhood House with up to 20 participants each week for 8 weeks. All reported improved English in conversation and reading.
- *Intergenerational Literacy* was addressed in three projects through literacy for children & families, with a focus on immigrant families. Two were in Community Hubs, one a community agency and one a community school. The third program was offered by a social service agency.
  - The *School Talk Program* had 10 to 12 children and caregivers participating in each session. There were noticeable improvements in language and communication among the children attending.
  - The community agency sourced literacy materials for lending to encourage and support family reading. 25 children and families use these materials each year.
  - *Family Literacy Circle* - families with children 0-5 years old (with a special emphasis on low income families and families with English as a second language), attended 3 sessions with 12 parents and up to 22 children. All parents reported that the program helped them get into a pattern of reading to their children at home.
- Another program supported *Children with Disabilities with Literacy and Learning*. To date, six children and their respective families have participated, with all children reported as improving their skills. Parents benefited from getting tips from the tutor on what worked with their child and things that they could practice at home.
- *Literacy for Homeless*- South Side Community Church Learning Table and the Mobile Van provide resources for the homeless. Between 20 and 30 participants come to the table each time with about 12 books borrowed. This program will continue to use the resources from the South Side Homeless drop in and the van.
- The *English Conversation Group for ESL Seniors* has been very popular and well attended with 23 participants. This program gave ESL seniors, who are often isolated, a chance to learn English and practice speaking while also meeting and networking with other seniors. Ongoing plans for this program continue.
- Two of the projects, located at Burnaby Family Life and the South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, supported *Community Hub* activities.

In terms of **community capacity building**, Literacy Now Burnaby provided four half-day workshops for community agencies and staff:

- *Proposal Writing* workshops - 34 attended
- *A Community Celebration of Literacy* validated year 2 of the plan and participants suggested additional ways to move forward - 35 people attended
- *Financial Literacy Workshops* - frontline staff from local agencies had the opportunity to participate in a mini workshop on financial literacy to determine whether it would be suitable for their clients - 20 agency representatives attended. The workshop series is offered free of charge for agencies to provide for their clients. The workshops were presented by Family Services and funded by Van City Credit Union.

- *Plain Language Workshop* - showed how using plain language in written materials, and when speaking, can make communication more inclusive and improve understanding. Time was allocated for review and revision of individual program materials. Most who attended expressed an interest in learning more about plain language and taking a *Plain Language Train the Trainer Workshop* to bring to their agencies.
- *Program Evaluation Workshop* -focused on learning how to set up a meaningful evaluation framework for your program and how to create more efficient ways to collect information and data that truly show your program's community impact - 16 in attendance.

One *Financial Literacy Series* was booked in collaboration with Byrne Creek Secondary School. Many families in the Byrne Creek community are immigrants or refugees. The results were very positive for the families and the school would like to present the workshops again.

A significant focus of the Literacy Now Burnaby Steering Committee has been community awareness. Literacy Now Burnaby believes that Burnaby is a community that values reading as a foundation skill for lifelong learning. Members of Literacy Now Burnaby experience Burnaby as a community that reads in many different languages and the steering Committee wanted to celebrate the many ways people in Burnaby read, everyday. Literacy Now Burnaby and its many partner organizations marked *International Literacy Day* on September 8, 2009, by holding *Burnaby Reads* events celebrating Burnaby as a community that reads.

The community was invited to participate in *Burnaby Reads Day* on September 8 and taking a minimum of 8 minutes to catch up on personal reading. Community read-ins took place between 4:00 pm and 5:00 pm at:

- Bob Prittie Metrotown Branch, Burnaby Public Library
- Brentwood Town Centre
- Eastburn Community Centre
- Lougheed Town Centre

Organizers were pleased with the community's response as nearly 100 people took part in read-ins across the City. CBC Radio covered the event. Segments of the event and interviews were on the afternoon drive home show, "On the Coast". They were broadcast from the *Read-In* held at the Bob Prittie, Metrotown Branch.

In addition to the community read-ins, Literacy Now Burnaby sponsored a literacy awareness campaign on Translink in September and it promoted reading via a photo contest where images would answer the question "What makes Burnaby a special place to read?" Judging took place in late October 2009. The contest drew over 120 entries of "people reading" in Burnaby.

Prizes were presented at a well attended community event in early December, 2009. This event had coverage that included some of the prize winning photos being printed in two local papers and all photos were displayed at the Bob Prittie Metrotown Branch from January 11 to March 22, 2010.

### Major impacts to date

In addition to the Committee's funding of literacy projects and other activities, the LOC is participating in several community tables and has regular communication with many of the service agencies. Participation and connections include: Literacy Now Burnaby Steering Committee, ECD Table (member), BIPT (member), ECD Neighbourhood Action Team (member) Burnaby Interagency, the Burnaby School Board, Norburn Interagency, Eastburn Interagency,

Metrotown Interagency, Burnaby Community School Coordinators, BC Housing, The Cave Youth Employment, Douglas College Literacy Program, Literacy BC, Literacy Now, Burnaby Family Life, South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Voices of Burnaby Seniors, Eastburn Seniors, Immigrant Services Society, City Hall Social Planning Department, Burnaby Social Sustainability Initiative, the Welcome Centre, Mosaic and Burnaby Multicultural Society.

Through connections with the community we have been able to increase the importance of literacy to the point where it is now seen as a community-wide initiative.

Participation and interest in the programs funded by Literacy Now Burnaby demonstrate that the need is there and that there is initiative and energy to move forward with ideas and collaboration to improve opportunities for learning.

Workshop attendance and feedback from the workshops reflect that the Steering Committee met a need for capacity building.

### **Adjustments to the community plan**

Literacy Now Burnaby is in the process of conducting an assessment of our progress so far. An outside evaluator is conducting the assessment and the information gathered will be used to guide the Steering Committee during the next phase of implementation.

### **Plans for Fall 2010**

September - *Program Sustainability* Workshop - almost fully subscribed

October - *Burnaby Reads* Celebrations

November - *Proposal Writing* Workshop

Other projects in development include:

- Working with BC Housing to develop literacy for residents - in beginning stages with several ideas to pursue.
- Working with Lougheed Mall, Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, the Burnaby Public Library, the Tri-Cities LOC and area agencies to hold a monthly *Play and Learn for Children and Families* at Lougheed Town Centre Mall.

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## **BURNABY LITERACY STEERING COMMITTEE**

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**Number of Members** - 14 (including the LOC)

**Sectors involved** - Business; public sector organizations - public library; the School District - including district administration and community school representatives; the Community College; government - federal level; police; and unions.

The individuals serving on the committee represent organizations and agencies, and most are Burnaby residents. They are also volunteering time beyond their work commitments and as such also represent the private citizen.

The Literacy Now Burnaby Steering Committee met 8 times in 2009 and 3 times to date in 2010. We were also in frequent correspondence by email and telephone.

In addition, the Burnaby Reads Day task group met 3 times, had conference call meetings twice, the Burnaby Reads Day Photo Contest task group met 3 times, and kept in touch by email and telephone.

### **Increased Understanding of Literacy issues and needs**

Participation in many community tables and agency meetings has brought literacy front and centre in the community. We are now a “presence” and literacy a known topic that people are thinking about and interested in hearing more about.

The LOC notes that more of the people she speaks with are aware of literacy as being about more than just reading and writing. We have seen a shift in awareness over the past year.

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## **LITERACY OUTREACH COORDINATION**

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### **How has the Literacy Outreach Coordinator position, funded through 2010 Legacies Now, enhanced literacy work in your community?**

The LOC has made it possible to plan, implement and coordinate the literacy initiatives we have undertaken in Burnaby as outlined in this report.

The coordinator also participates in a broad range of community meetings (see below) which are attended by representatives of other Burnaby organizations. This offers a great opportunity to gain information about community needs and activities. Connecting with agencies is an effective way to share literacy ideas, learn about different agencies and their clients, and find opportunities to add literacy to programs. Meeting with the agency representatives is a good way to get the word out about literacy initiatives and to ensure attendance at the events hosted by Burnaby Literacy Now. Meeting with the agency representatives is also the best way to ensure increased awareness of literacy issues and the effect improved literacy can have on people's lives.

The LOC has taken the initiative to connect agencies with other relevant programs, and has connected programs with people who need them. One example involved contacting an employment training program at Douglas College to see if refugee youth from Byrne Creek Secondary School would be eligible for the program. This correspondence enhanced opportunities for Burnaby students.

### **The number of community tables/regularly scheduled community meetings (excluding literacy task group meetings) attended by the Literacy Outreach Coordinator:**

- The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Table (4) meetings and the Neighbourhood Action Committee (a subcommittee of the ECD table) (3) meetings
- The Burnaby Intercultural Planning (BIPT) Table - (5) meetings and 6 BIPT events
- The Burnaby Interagency Council quarterly meetings (4)
- Norburn Interagency - (4) meetings
- Eastburn Interagency - (6) meetings
- Metrotown Interagency - (3) meetings

- Vibrant Burnaby - quarterly - (3) meetings
- Vancouver Foundation Community Development workshops - (2)
- Understanding the Early Years - (3) meetings
- Voices of Burnaby Seniors - (3) meetings and email & phone correspondence

From April to December the LOC was also actively involved in the Health Literacy Prototype Collaborative and had regular team meetings, attended learning sessions and participated in the December closing event. The Burnaby team continues to work on improving Health Literacy.

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## COLLABORATIONS

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Eight community agencies are directly involved in the planning and implementation of community literacy programs. Members of these agencies are integral to the success of the Literacy Now Burnaby Steering Committee and their participation and expertise support, plan and facilitate workshops, aid in community consultation and promote awareness for literacy in our community.

The **Burnaby Art Gallery** collaborated with libraries for the photo contest. They coordinated the photos and copied them to discs for the judges. The curator hosted and took part as one of the judges in the selection of winners. He also created a slide show of winning and runner up photos for the awards presentation. He tastefully mounted and framed all of the photos for the photo display at the Bob Prittie Metrotown Branch, Burnaby Public Library.

We continue to work together on community initiatives with **Tri- Cities & New Westminster Literacy Now**.

**BC Housing** is interested in working with us to promote literacy within the housing sites. We have just started exploring ideas and are actively looking for models of programs we can work toward. One idea is a pre-employment type trades program for youth and men. We are looking at other models and connecting with those organizations to learn more about them.

The **Burnaby School District** provides a comprehensive educational program to meet the individualized needs and interests of a large community of early, school-age and adult learners. Community collaborative initiatives include:

- *Education Week* in early March, which was held in partnership with Burnaby Public Libraries. Events were well-attended by seniors, families, and youth in our community. We continue to strengthen our long standing commitment to work in collaboration with our literacy leaders in the community.
- An *Early Learning Committee* comprised of members from the Early Childhood Development Table, early childcare services providers, Burnaby Family Life, Libraries, Burnaby Parks and Recreation, StrongStart facilitators, South Burnaby Neighbourhood House and school district staff, teachers, principals and school-based community coordinators met to begin discussions on how we support families as they transition from pre-school to the K-12 school system. Our goal is to continue these collaborative conversations to enhance environments for families.
- We continue to build capacity in our *StrongStart Centres* with the addition of 4 new sites for a total of 12 StrongStart Centres in Burnaby. Participation rates indicate that it is a valued family and community resource.

- Full day kindergarten will be introduced in 24 of our 41 Burnaby schools in the 2010-2011 year. As we transition into full day kindergarten, we are committed to meeting the developmental needs of our early learners. We have established an *Early Learning, Beliefs and Values* statement to guide our practice. This statement, created by kindergarten teachers and recognized by StrongStart facilitators, will form the philosophical underpinnings of our work with young learners.
- As part of the *Early Learning Program* at Windsor Elementary School, kindergarten students became mentors for three and four-year old students from Garden Village Preschool. The *Kindergarten Mentorship Program* was developed to explore the possibilities of building leadership capacity in young children.

The preschool and kindergarten students came together once a week with their teachers to play and learn together. As a result of their work, the kindergarten students created the *Kindergarten Recipe for Leadership*. This program is one example of how schools support early learning and connect with the community.

- In 2008, Burnaby was one of four school districts in the province selected to participate in a three-year pilot program to provide a culturally sensitive and responsive family literacy program for new immigrant parents and their young children (3-4 years old). Funding for the *IPALS (Immigrant Parent as Literacy Supporters)* program was through the Ministry of Education and the 2010 Legacies NOW fund.

The program started at Maywood Community School in 2008 and involved 25 Mandarin speaking families. They have met monthly for the past two years. The program was expanded this school year to include a South Asian program at Second Street Community School involving 14 Punjabi and Hindi speaking families.

The programs operate from 12 - 3 pm, and involve sharing of food, adult only time, time with children and parents/caregivers at learning centres, and debriefing time where take-home learning resource materials are provided.

Each program is staffed by a Kindergarten teacher who leads the adult sessions with translators and a StrongStart facilitator who works with the children.

- The *Welcome Centre*, established in 2008, continues to service the needs of our refugee and immigrant families by providing initial language assessment placement testing for students entering the school system while connecting parents with services in the City of Burnaby. *SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools)* workers situated at the centre offer support for families with housing, employment and medical needs. School principals are pleased with the seamless support for families offered by the SWIS workers. SWIS serviced 4473 clients from August 2009 - July 2010.
- Burnaby School District is hosting an *Early Learning Conference* in September 2010 and has invited members of our early childhood service providers to join as we focus on inquiry and play-based learning. We will be offering a variety of sessions - StrongStart facilitators, student teachers, administrators, colleagues and community members - that challenge our thinking about traditional structures of teaching and learning. Sessions will explore ways to work with children's natural approaches to learning, teaching with respect for children's competencies and innate tools and passions.



Seeing the world through the eyes of children and making their learning visible can create a rich image of a child who is resourceful, curious, and full of potential.

- *PAWS II* is a program designed especially to meet the needs of refugee students at the secondary level. This involves 20 secondary students who have little to no literacy skills. The aim of the program is to accelerate the literacy skills of these students and build other essential workplace skills. Many of these students enter secondary in their late teens and need to procure these skills quickly as they must secure employment, in order to repay government loans or assist the family, (often single females head households) in paying living expenses such as rent, food, etc.

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## THE INITIATIVES

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### Community-Based Initiatives:

Adult participants in programs focused on family literacy: 67

Children participating in programs: 209

Youth participating in programs specifically for youth: 120

120 children between 6 and 12+ (children and youth) participated in the boys and girls club program.

There were no youth specific programs although several efforts were made to work with other groups to that end. It was one of the gaps noticed initially and one that continues to remain unaddressed despite several efforts.

Seniors participating in programs specifically for seniors: 23

Burnaby Multicultural Seniors Conversation Class - 23, with good attendance.

### Adults participating in events:

Proposal Writing -34, Community Celebration - 35, Financial Literacy - 20  
Plain Language - 5 and Program Evaluation - 16

Burnaby Reads Day events; approximately 100

Photo Contest Prize Presentation Event & Celebration - 60 people

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## WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED

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### **What we have learned about the community development process.**

It takes time to create connections and build relationships with community leaders, to learn how things work in the community, and to find out what the needs, strengths and areas of future growth might be. It is most important to build relationships with community agencies and individuals so that one has the credibility to share ideas, inspire creative thought and initiate the appropriate action.

We believe that what our children learn today shapes our community for years to come. By supporting our families - together, we strengthen our community.