

THE COWICHAN VALLEY COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR HELP



**SERENITY
CHILD AND PARENT
SOCIETY**

The Serenity Child and Parent Society has spent the past two years planning a residential resource for young parents and children in the Cowichan Valley.

The critical need for this program has been widely acknowledged throughout the community.

While recognizing the need, the Ministry of Child and Family Development has decided not to provide funding for the program, based upon their analysis of provincial priorities.

For more details and how you can help, please visit:

www.TheSerenityHouse.ca

or contact Lorna or Jessica McPherson:
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CHARITABLE STATUS #: BN – 83221 5123 RR 0001

In all of life, no relationship is more critical than the bond between a mother and her baby. When mother and child are separated, the consequences are far-reaching and the pain can last a lifetime.

The Serenity Child and Parent Society was established to support young parents in the Cowichan Valley who risk losing their children through a lack of personal, physical, educational and financial resources. The design of this residential program incorporates the very latest approaches to infant care and primary prevention. Planning for this professionally operated resource has already taken two years and the response from the community at large has been overwhelmingly positive. Collaborative partnerships with other community groups concerned with the well-being of children and young people have been carefully negotiated and are now in place.

Doug Routley, MLA Cowichan – Ladysmith said;

“The project proposed by Lorna and Jessica McPherson is the kind of project that will have a positive effect in our community and lends itself to a pilot project that would be of value throughout BC.”

Larry Mattin Principal of Adult and Alternate Education in the Cowichan Valley said;

“Such a transition home could help our teen moms break the cycle of poverty, transition from foster care to adulthood smoother, and become contributing members of our society.”

Jean Crowder, MP said;

“The fact that a well – trained, mother-daughter team will be at the heart of this new program is an inspiration to me; I’m sure their example will also inspire the young moms they wish to help.”

Growing Together Child and Parent Society said;

“There is a desperate need for housing/homes to meet the needs of young mothers and their babies in the Cowichan Valley. As a result mothers who are deemed homeless are being separated from their babies.”



SOME OF THE SERENITY CHILD AND PARENT SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: AMANDA WHITEFIELD, CURTIS EVANS, LORNA MCPHERSON, GERRY FEWSTER, JESSICA MCPHERSON, RUTH FORSYTHE, KELLY BUCCINI, KATHLEEN NEILSON AND LISA VARASTEJ.

The Serenity Child and Parent Society Project has been recognized as a “priority” need in many reports relating to services in the Cowichan Valley including: the ‘Success by Six Public Consultation’ reports; the ‘Status of the Community Report’ and the ‘Inadequate Shelter Report’ published by Social Planning Cowichan; and the Cairnsmore Action Team’s ‘Neighborhood Action Plan.’

Applications for funding have been made to: The Vancouver Foundation; The Victoria Foundation; The Ministry of Child & Family Development (MCFD); Success by Six; B.C. Housing; CYC-BC, Canadian Tire, CMHC; The Elizabeth Fry Society; First Call; Steelworkers of America; along with all Banks, Service Clubs, Insurance Companies and Car Dealerships in the Duncan area.

The society recently applied for a \$750,000 grant from the Ministry under the Major Capital Funding Program for new child care spaces. In turning down this application, Ministry officials indicated that they did not have the resources to review all applications in detail and that Provincial needs are simply beyond their current funding resources. When asked why the Serenity Child and Parent Society had not been successful, they offered no further explanation. It is interesting to note that none of the many applications from the Cowichan Valley received a favorable response.

Having received so much community support for this project, the Directors of the Serenity Child & Parent Society are anxious to know why this much needed project is not considered to be a priority by the Provincial Government. This is a classic example of a grass-roots response to a glaring community need and those who have spent years in developing it to this stage believe that it should not be allowed to fall by the wayside.

The Serenity Project still needs a facility and funding. Please visit the website above or phone us directly if you would like more information or if you would like to find out how you or someone you know can help.

WITH ALL FUNDING AVENUES EXPLORED, WE NOW CALL ON THE CITIZENS, BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE COWICHAN VALLEY TO DONATE THEIR TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN AND

SHOW BC WE CARE!

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY STATISTICS:

	Cowichan	Lake Cowichan	BC
Lone Parent	28%	28.9%	?
Average Family Income	\$59.5K	\$51.7K	\$64.8K
Population Without High School	19.5%	?	17.2%
Infant mortality rate (per 1000)	3.3	8	4
Adult Alcohol Consumption/Year	85.0L	97.0L	58.0L
Hospitalization Rate of Children 0-14 for Respiratory Disease	22.7%	20.4%	10.4%
Child Abuse Rate (per 1000)	11.0	?	7.6
Children in Care (per 1000)	19.5	10.7	9.9
Teen Pregnancy (per 1000, 15-17yrs)	30.8	64.7	20.5
Low Birth Rate (per 1000)	52.2	30.6	50.7

LOCAL SERENITY SOCIETY STATS:

Research conducted in 2006 of local resources to determine the numbers of young parents that could potentially use the Serenity House Program.

Resource Name	Number of Parents
Cowichan Valley Women against Violence	38
House of Friendship	21
Cowichan Family Life	20
Community Options Society	16
Festubert Clinic – Four Maternity Physicians	3
Cowichan Valley Open Learning Cooperative	11
MCFD Children in Care under the age of 5yrs. (Note: this does not include 1 st Nations children in care on reserve)	50
Personal Awareness	10
Duncan Methadone Clinic	8

Note: Some parents may be using more than one of these resources, or may not be eligible or accepting of this program. We conservatively estimate the number of parents that could use the Serenity Program is about 30 in the Cowichan Valley.