

THE CALGARY LEARNING VILLAGE COLLABORATIVE LEAVES THE NEST

Nurtured and developed by The Calgary Children's Initiative and its many partners for more than six years, the Calgary Learning Village Collaborative (CLVC) is ready to fly on its own. In the past few months, this unique partnership, involving 15 different organizations, has established an innovative governance model and hired its own Director, Jo-Anne Gibson. Jo-Anne brings a wealth of enthusiasm, knowledge and experience having worked with Calgary child and youth serving organizations as well as the National Health Service in the U.K. Jo-Anne's mandate is to work with community-based organizations to weave a fabric of social support that helps children and their families succeed in the Greater Forest Lawn (GFL) area.

The real thrust of the Learning Village Collaborative is about redefining the role of schools as the centre of the community -- places where children, families, teachers and community stakeholders can meet and work together. Already, rooms within three schools have been designated as "Family Places", decorated and furnished to create safe and welcoming environments. As Marie McNaughton, Family Place Coordinator explains, "Our hope is that they will become vibrant gathering places within the community." The success of these three "Family Places" has spurred their expansion into four more schools in the fall of this year.

While Family Places within schools provide the venue for community participation and support, much of the success of the Learning Village Collaborative can be attributed to the Community Development Coordinators who help facilitate discussions and identify the key issues and opportunities within each neighbourhood, and then utilize a network of contacts to help schools and community realize their goals. While each community is

different, the collaborative's work is focused on increasing recreational opportunities, activities for children, literacy support, family programs, community safety, basic needs, and perhaps most importantly, increasing the volunteer participation in local schools.



Fun with science at the Learning Village

Success also can be attributed to the Recreation Connectors who connect children and families to recreational activities. Connectors work with partner organizations to deliver support, programs and services to local residents. Playgroups, drop-in sessions, parenting classes, after-school programs for kids, family nights, recreational opportunities and adult education programs are offered by agencies in convenient locations at low or no cost, removing economic and transportation barriers for local residents and giving them the opportunity to build connections with

others in their community. Parents, children, and community residents are invited to participate in Family Place activities. The Science Adventure Club is run by TELUS' World of Science, and introduces youngsters to the wonder of science by offering hands-on activities during after-school hours. Calgary's Epcor Theatre leads the popular Story Tree Program that engages youngsters in the art of drama and storytelling. Most recently, a car-sharing program was launched that allows community members and local organizations low-cost access to a vehicle they can use to address the transportation needs of local residents and children. Making sure everyone can participate is a key to the success of the CLVC.

Clay and Vi Riddell fund the CLVC through a generous donation to United Way of Calgary and Area. CLVC partners participate in many ways, including staff designated to the CLVC, use of their facilities and equipment, and contributions of expertise, time and materials. The Riddell's commitment to fostering lifelong learning and creating neighbourhoods that are resilient and hopeful is a shining example of how we can all work together to make Calgary a city that is great for our children, youth and their families.

To find out more about the Calgary Learning Village Collaborative, please contact Jo-Anne at 403-204-8280 ext. 207 or visit www.clvc.ca.

*The Calgary Learning Village Collaborative partners include: Aspen Family and Community Network Society, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Calgary and Area, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority, Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth, Calgary Board of Education (CBE), Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD), Calgary Family Services, Calgary Health Region (CHR), Calgary YMCA, City of Calgary, Families Matter, Hull Child and Family Services, The Calgary Children's Initiative (CCI) and Woods Homes.

UPCOMING CCI EVENTS

September 29, 2008

Conference for Parenting Professionals

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Carriage House Inn, 9030 Macleod Trail S.

Topics and speakers include:

1. What parents want: Carol Crill Russell from *Invest in Kids* to present.
2. What parents need: The Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research present the Benchmark Survey: *What do Alberta adults understand about child development?*
3. What children need: Stuart Shankar to present on healthy brain development for children.

Breakout sessions and lunch included.

For more information, call Amber Forest at 403-231-2610

September 30, 2008

Media Training for Youth

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

TRUE YOUTH Media ToolKit Launch for Youth-Serving Agencies

Join us as the Social Imaging Action Group launches its TRUE YOUTH Media ToolKit that is designed to help youth serving organizations engage their youth in contacting the media to report on positive youth stories.

For more information, call Amber Forest at 403-231-2610

September 30, 2008

Media Training Youth-Serving Agencies

4:15 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

TRUE YOUTH Media Training Event for Youth age 16-24

TRUE Mount Royal Collage Communications Department, 4825 Mount Royal Gate S.W.

This media-training event is geared towards youth 16-24 years old. The goal is to encourage and teach youth how to get their stories out in the public by using traditional and social media.

For more information, call Amber Forest at 403-231-2610



Our Work Current CCI Initiatives

Youth Media Toolkit Launch in September

The Social Imaging Action Group is nearing the completion of its anticipated TRUE YOUTH Media Toolkit. The goal of having a toolkit is to "bust" youth stereotypes in media and draw attention to the positive events and stories that are happening in the community. Training for the toolkit is scheduled for the end of September and will provide hands-on opportunities to work with media experts.

For more information, call Amber Forest at 403-231-2610

Campaign to Get Kids off the Couch

On July 16, the CCI's social awareness campaign will launch. This educational mail-out, which targets Forest Lawn, Bridgeland, Huntington Hills and Glenbrook, promotes the benefits of recreation and provides access to recreation. For information on recreation programs (sports, clubs, volunteering, art, drama, scouts and guides etc.) call 211, go to the Calgary Youth Recreation/Leisure Directory at informcalgary.ca, or call the Calgary Public Library.

For more information on the campaign, call Margie Ronca at 403-231-2613.

CCI STAFF TEAM

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More Fun at TeenZone

TeenZone, a demonstration project running in the communities north of McKnight, will offer an amazing array of fun after-school activities this year. Shauna Cox, Project Manager, and Roz Campbell, Recreation Connector, for TeenZone, along with project partners*, are thrilled to announce they will be offering 13 programs during the 2008/09 school year. Some of the diverse range of offerings of interest to youth include:

1. *All Nations Theatre* - improvised acting, creativity and comedy;
2. *Punjab Dance* - East Indian Bhangra dance and singing;
3. *Girls Culture Club* - an opportunity for immigrant girls to talk, play games, be creative, go on field trips and make friends;
4. *Two-Wheel View* - an opportunity to learn about the environment, fix a bike, earn a bike and explore the community;
5. *Kicks Soccer* - a fun, challenging soccer league opportunity;
6. *GroundWorks Integrated Arts* - an opportunity for dance, music and art taught by professionals;
7. *The Eagle's Back Pow-Wow Dance Group* - an opportunity to learn about aboriginal culture through dance and tradition;
8. *YMCA Youth Leadership* - opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills;
9. *Hip Hop Dance* - an opportunity to learn the latest hip hop moves and music;
10. *Live Comedy Club* - learn to be a comedian, and;
11. *Act Out* - an opportunity to act out dreams, fantasies and concerns.

The purpose of this three-year demonstration project is to strengthen, enhance and add to existing programs to create a network of high quality after-school programs for youth ages 11-16 years, with particular emphasis on vulnerable youth. TeenZone is being thoroughly evaluated and results of the evaluation will be shared with the community at the end of the project. For more information on TeenZone, contact Shauna Cox at shauna@calgaryteenzone.com.

*Burns Memorial Fund, The Calgary Children's Initiative, City of Calgary, and United Way of Calgary and Area.