

## Richmond Food Bank Society Annual Report for 2010-2011

**We served** record numbers of people over the past year, on average 510 households in a week. Our all-time high service was to 541 households the first week of October. Our pre-recession average was 307. As well as providing basic grocery assistance to people coming to the food bank, we continue to provide delivery service to people with significant transportation barriers, serve as a distribution hub for community meals and other organizations that provide meals to low income people, and invite agencies into the food bank to offer their services, among them are SUCCESS, Richmond Family Place, and the Richmond Food Security Society. Richmond Health Department's dental hygiene program offers quarterly screening and fluoride varnishing for preschool children and Richmond Public Library brings a monthly lending library on all three distribution days as well as distributing age-appropriate books purchased by CUPE library employees, as part of our Feed the body, Feed the mind program. Everyone Can Play soccer program continues to be a very popular program for children at the food bank.

We have re-established a relationship with the Langara College nursing program and have had two teams of students who provided health information and blood pressure testing, updated our display board and presented information on the RFB at community meetings and events as well as working with staff and volunteers to develop and present social justice presentations to the McRobert's Secondary School grade eight social studies classes in the fall with a follow-up in the spring. Volunteer Richmond is manning a community information booth and a volunteer newly retired from Richmond Health Services is providing health information.

**In the community**, we continue to administer the funds and actively engage in the Richmond Poverty Response Committee and are engaged at a number of tables, including the Richmond Community Advisory Committee, Literacy Richmond, Richmond Seniors Falls Prevention Network, Richmond Food Security Society, Richmond Community Meals, and Richmond Seniors Planning Table. Reciprocal visits between the RFB and the Ministries of Housing and Social Development and Children and Families have helped clarify communications and expectations of assistance available to respective and joint clients.

**Our volunteers** are outstanding for their dedication, compassion, and flexibility, serving in all aspects of our organization: collecting and sorting donations, manning distributions, cleaning, attending events and giving presentations, weeding and harvesting vegetables, reading stories to children, providing guidance and oversight as directors, preparing nutritious recipe samples, and being understanding with people who need someone to listen.

On Canada Day, volunteers and staff walked again in the annual parade in Steveston, after which, volunteer Johanna Waldorf opened her home for a barbecue lunch for participating volunteers, providing most welcome refreshment and rest from the crowds and activity of the parade and fair grounds. Having a BBQ following the parade seemed to have made the occasion more significant and appealing as there were three times the usual number of volunteers. In August we celebrated our volunteers with a barbecue lunch Terra Nova Rural Park, the delicious meal prepared and served by the Tsawwassen Lions Club, and were entertained by our long-time volunteer musicians Arlene, Kevin, and Simon. Long-time volunteer and supporters, Ernie & June Fanslau each had illness and

injury that prevented them hosting the volunteers barbecue as they had every year since 1999. Sadly for us all, Ernie died in October.

Continuing volunteer recognition and celebration included a mental health “jeopardy” game and lunch prepared by our Langara student nurses, our annual potluck lunch at the food bank in the autumn with a drugs and addictions presentation by our the nursing students (based upon a volunteer needs survey), and an elegant and outstanding dinner prepared by Rose Rourke and her team of St Alban’s Community Meal volunteers, music courtesy of Mark Ash the band from Pathways Clubhouse.

**Publicity and recognition** were provided by Richmond Food Bank’s Dragon Boat Team, “Paddling for People”, who were interviewed for SHAW TV program featuring the Steveston Maritime Festival in August, at which our team competed and placed honourably. In April the team launched its second season with expectations of more fun and improved performance. Volunteers Gary Lake, Eric Ho, and Arzeena Hamir provided more excellent publicity for the RFB by serving on the United Way Speakers Bureau, telling stories of individuals who have been impacted by our service. Long-time volunteer, Vi Mar, was also interviewed for a SHAW segment on volunteerism. President Gary Lake gave an excellent interview for SHAW’s “Together is Amazing” Fill the Food Bank campaign which generated timely and significant food and cash donations. And Director Vivian Cheung employed her multilingual skills to represent the RFB in a Fairchild TV interview.

**Looking ahead**, our directors and staff are committed to continual learning and exploring possibilities for improving capacity and sustainability. To that end, we are registered for the BC Centre for Non Profit Management and Sustainability’s Helping the Helper series of workshops on best practices in the non-profit sector. Together with Pathways Clubhouse, we attended the Real Estate Foundation of BC’s Inaugural Social Purposes Real Estate Conference” to further our understanding of processes required to achieve our goal for suitable and sustainable operating space and have had promising dialogue with the Tzu Chi Foundation on further ways that we can work together and support each other’s efforts. We also attended Vancouver Board of Trade’s “Tough Talk for Tender Causes” workshop on fundraising, the Richmond Emergency Preparedness workshop, participated in Richmond Community Foundation’s community scan and dialogue session, and are invited to a “Shared Space and Services” follow-up with a number of community foundations. We are pleased and gratified at responses from community partners and potential funders as we work to develop a program to engage socially isolated and vulnerable seniors in volunteerism and another to promote school readiness for children at the food bank.

**We are very grateful** to the many individuals and groups that help and support our work with donations of money, food, and the time and effort required to conduct the many and successful fundraising campaigns throughout the year on our behalf, as recorded on our website. We thank our regular and seasonal volunteers, our volunteer Board of Directors, our donors, supporters, and staff for the service they provide to our community.