

Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre in 2009

BY PAM BEST

When Westcoast opened its doors in 1989 at Main and 24th at the Mid-Main Health Clinic in Vancouver no one could ever have imagined the journey that lay ahead of us. Over the years we have seen programs and funding come and go. We have worked with some of the most talented people in the early childhood community. And we are proud to have served an overwhelming number of parents and caregivers who are working to provide the best for children and families in BC.

Over these past 20-plus years, our mission has remained constant: to provide information, referrals, training, and resources to families, individuals, and organizations who are seeking the best care and early learning for children.

We accomplish our mission through a number of programs and services:

Westcoast Library

Our pride and joy and one of the largest circulating collections of early childhood education and care materials in Canada. Currently there are over 15,000 items in the catalogue, not including our Child Care Resource and Referral Collection or our Mobile Lending collection. This year we were able to add almost \$10,000 worth of resources to the collection with a grant from CKNW.

Anyone in BC can borrow from the Westcoast Library. It costs \$5 for an individual card that can be renewed on an annual basis. For those outside the Lower Mainland, books are sent via Canada Post,

anywhere in BC, return postage paid by Westcoast. Other items can be shipped or couriered at the borrower's expense. You can search the Library online via our web site at www.wstcoast.org.

Training, Workshops, and Courses, Demonstration Teaching

Westcoast continues its tradition of offering quality professional development, training, workshops, and courses to families, early childhood educators, family child care providers, and others. Last year alone we offered over 70 different workshops and courses to almost 1300 people. Westcoast also continues to offer customized workshops to organizations in and beyond Vancouver on a fee-for-service basis. Our field is challenged to meet the needs of di-



Westcoast front desk Staff: Annette Matthew, administrator, Jyoti Joon, Saturday receptionist, and Nora Mejia, trainer.



Westcoast staff review the Job Postings bulletin board. Almost 600 jobs from all over BC are posted on the web site each year.

PHOTOS BY SHAWN NYGREN

Focus

verse populations; at the same time staff will be required to attend more training opportunities to meet the requirements of the ECE registry in 2009. Westcoast is able to work with individual programs to set up training for your staff onsite or in your local community.

Safe Spaces Presentations, Kits, Courses, and Workshops

Safe Spaces is a unique program that uses an integrated approach to fostering the development of pro-social behaviours in preschool-aged children. Children are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities to learn to solve problems with others in peaceful ways. Westcoast trains staff teams to understand the roots and effects of bullying and to use the Safe Spaces approach and materials with children in their pro-

grams. Over the years Westcoast has trained staff in over 150 programs in BC.

Publications and Print Resources for Sale

Westcoast has a number of helpful print resources available for sale online in our Marketplace. These print resources were developed in response to the many questions our advisors received.

One of the most popular resources available is the INFORM Guide. If you operate a child care program in BC, chances are that you have one or are at least familiar with it. It covers the basics about organizations, working with boards, developing policies and procedures regarding human resources and administration, job descriptions, and financial

resources. The INFORM Guide is used as a text book in some ECE administration courses in BC. We are planning to develop a companion to the INFORM Guide that will offer usable financial planning frameworks such as budgets.

Job Postings

The Westcoast Job Posting site is one of the most popular and complete job posting sites for the ECE community in BC. Programs who post with us say that they are impressed with the exposure their postings get to a specific audience of ECE and related professionals. Over 500 jobs are posted each year and the site is being improved all the time. Again, you can search the postings from anywhere in BC through our web site, so location is not a barrier to recruiting suitable candidates.

Consultation and Referral

Westcoast responds to callers interested in a variety of subjects related to child care in BC. Most popular topics include getting starting in the early childhood field, starting a child care program, setting up



PHOTOS BY SHAWN NYGREN

Kathleen Gray, librarian, is helping trainer Nora Mejia to borrow a music kit for her evening workshop.



Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre founding board chair, Gyda Chud, with executive director, Dianne Liscumb.

early learning environments, administration and management of programs including policies and procedures, resources for programming and child development, and many others.

Westcoast is funded by the Province of BC, City of Vancouver, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Success by 6, Gaming, private foundations, and donations from friends of Westcoast.

For more information about our many programs and services visit our web site at www.wstcoast.org or contact us via our toll-free number at 1-877-262-0022, or in the Lower Mainland at 604-709-5661.

Pam Best is Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre's co-executive director with Dianne Liscumb.

Westcoast Teams Up with ELSA Net

Over the past summer and fall, Westcoast worked with staff at ELSA Net (English Language Services for Adults) to design two new felt board stories for use with preschoolers. Funded through a BC 150 Grant from the Ministry of the Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism, ELSA Net contracted children's author Heather Tekavec to create two original stories that would introduce young children to contributions of Aboriginal peoples and immigrant pioneers to BC. Working with Heather Tekavec and a Project Advisory Committee involving representatives from BC Aboriginal Child Care Society, Immigrant Services Society, Burnaby Public Library, and Vancouver Public Library, Westcoast and ELSA Net finalized scripts for two exciting age-appropriate stories "Up on the Mighty Fraser" and "The Gathering Day."

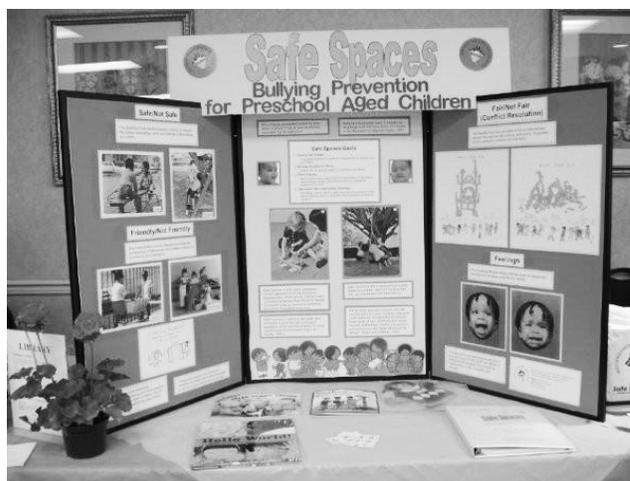
"Up on the Mighty Fraser" leads children through BC's development over the past 150 years through contributions of immigrant groups using the maple tree growing from sprout to maturity to show the passage of time. "The Gathering Day" uses exploration of the five senses to highlight common BC Aboriginal food gathering practices through the adventures of a young Aboriginal girl and her grandmother.

From the final story scripts, Westcoast created pattern pieces for early childhood educators to use to create felt board versions of each story. Westcoast facilitated make-and-take workshops with 60 child care staff from ELSA Net programs on Vancouver Island, the BC Interior, and Vancouver during October and November 2008. Participants learned how the two stories were developed, discussed ways to use the stories in their programs, identified a variety of extension activities to enhance children's learning, and created at least one of the felt board stories from the kits provided.

This collaboration is one example of how Westcoast works with other organizations to design new resources for ECEs across the province.



Westcoast Display Table at ECEBC Conference 2007



Safe Spaces Display on Westcoast Table at ECEBC Conference 2007

PHOTOS BY SHAWN NYGREN