



## PACIFIC AUTISM Family Centre

*Bringing Knowledge and Innovation Together*

### **PROJECT UPDATE - March 2011**

#### **Interim Governance**

The Pacific Autism Family Centre is an initiative led by parents from all walks of life through a non profit society - the Pacific Autism Centre Society (PACS). A foundation is being set up to raise money and support the building and operation of the PAFC. A Strategic Plan for the Centre was developed in 2008 by a large Advisory Council comprised of parents and professionals involved the autism community. The Strategic Plan is available on the website.

A Steering Committee has been formed to guide the development and planning of the project. The Steering Committee reports to the PACS's Board of Directors and is currently comprised of eight members representing parents, people on the autism spectrum, government, service providers and the scientific community. These members are:

Sergio Cocchia	Parent and Chair of Pacific Autism Centre Society
Dr. Suzanne Lewis	Clinical Professor, Department of Medical Genetics, University of British Columbia, Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC
Chris McIntosh	Adult on the autism spectrum
Louise Witt	Parent
Dr. Karen Bopp	Senior Behaviour Consultant for the British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
Deborah Pugh	Parent and Executive Director, ACT - Autism Community Training
Ian Brethour	Director, Performance Management & Accountability, Ministry of Social Development
Jim McLaughlin	Executive Director, The Children's Foundation

Two additional parent representatives will shortly join the Committee.

#### **Progress to Date**

Since the development of Strategic Plan, PACS has worked with government representatives, parents and professionals in the autism community to identify a site for the PAFC and develop a plan for the project. A site at East 18th and Kaslo Street in Vancouver BC owned by the City of

Vancouver and forming part of the block of land occupied by The Children's Foundation and adjacent to Sunny Hill Health Centre and the Children's Hearing and Speech Centre has been made available for the PAFC. An announcement was made on February 28th 2011, the press release can be found at [http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news\\_releases\\_2009-2013/2011PREM0015-000184.htm](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011PREM0015-000184.htm)

## **Consultation**

The Pacific Autism Centre Society completed a process of consultation in the fall of 2010 and the results are now available on the PAFC web site. Consultation was designed to help identify gaps in services for autism and to obtain feedback on how the PAFC could potentially help address these gaps. Consultation occurred in two main ways:

### ***Meetings***

Advertised meetings were held in 12 locations across British Columbia. These locations were, Chilliwack, Cranbrook, Fort St John, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo Powell River, Prince George, Terrace, Vernon Victoria and Vancouver ( two meetings). The meetings were facilitated by Fred Ford, an independent consultant and instructor at the University of Victoria specializing in Disability Studies. The meetings were attended by approximately 270 people.

### ***On line survey***

This was undertaken between October and December 2010 and in total there were 316 responses for analysis.

## **Outline Program**

The PAFC Steering Committee, incorporating the information gathered by the provincial consultation process and a series of working group meetings on operations, is now in the process of developing an outline program and concept for the Centre.

Overall the PAFC will be comprised of a main centre located in Vancouver (the hub) and a series of "spokes" or small centres across British Columbia. The spoke centres are envisioned to help provide families and individuals access to information, services and support. Feedback from the provincial consultation has reiterated the crucial importance of the "spoke concept" and the need for services and support in the regions of British Columbia.

The program and concept will be reviewed by the Advisory Council in April. Following this meeting the Centre's design will be developed in further detail in order to submit a rezoning application to the City of Vancouver. A business plan for the Centre is also under development.