

vancouverfoundation

Fall 2008

stories of modern philanthropy

EVERY CHILD IS AN ARTIST

Bringing out the Picasso
in every kid

NO CRYSTAL BALL

A geneticist looks at the
future of philanthropy

EARN-A-BIKE

Unique project teaches
budding bike mechanics

PEACE IT TOGETHER

Resolving world conflict,
one teenager at a time



The First Word . . .

To say that a lot has happened since our last issue would be the understatement of the year.



Today – less than five months later – we all find ourselves in extraordinary times. The wild swings in the stock market, unprecedented government bailouts, nationalization of some of the world's largest banks, the collapse of markets around the world, the Icelandic economy on its knees – all this has shaken up everything that once was solid. Even the most prudent and cautious of investors has been caught in this perfect financial storm.

Vancouver Foundation has not been left untouched. These larger forces are affecting our ability, at least in the short term, to do all the good work we would normally undertake for our community and with our partners.

We are now reviewing everything we do. In fact, we debated whether or not to cancel this issue of the magazine. We had written the stories in the summer and were about to go to print when the stock market crash began in earnest. We had already paid for the magazine earlier this year, as part of a larger partnership generously offered by Canada Wide Media. In the end, we realized that to cancel this issue (especially when we had already paid for it), would not only be imprudent, it would mean an important opportunity missed.

It's in times like these that understanding the impact of philanthropy becomes even more essential. We don't want the public to lose sight of the hundreds of organizations that work hard to make a difference in our communities. This magazine is full of stories of modern philanthropy. It's not about us. It's about the many charities we support and the organizations that hold funds with us. Now, more than ever, we need to remind people why non-profits still need their support.

The present turmoil in the markets will resolve itself eventually. Our economy and our communities will weather this storm. Of this we are confident. We survived the tech crash of 2000, and we will survive this as well. In the meantime, we want to remind all our fundholders, and all our readers, that Vancouver Foundation is here for the long term.

In this, the second issue of our magazine, we continue to cover the diverse topics and varied geography that are the hallmarks of *Vancouver Foundation*. From bears in Whistler, to seniors in Peachland, to modern opera in Vancouver, and young people working for peace on Bowen Island – there is a story of modern philanthropy to interest everyone.

We are striving for the common good, in uncommon times. And at least two things are certain – there are still many positive stories to be told, and (you can be sure) *Vancouver Foundation* magazine will continue to keep you informed and inspired.

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 ELECTRONIC IMAGING Bernhard Holzmann
 PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR Mandy Lau

Editorial e-mail: info@vancouverfoundation.ca
www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Editorial v-mail: 604-688-2204

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CHAIRMAN, CEO Peter Legge, O.B.C., LLD (HON)
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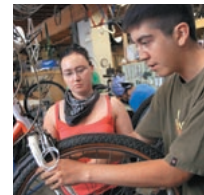


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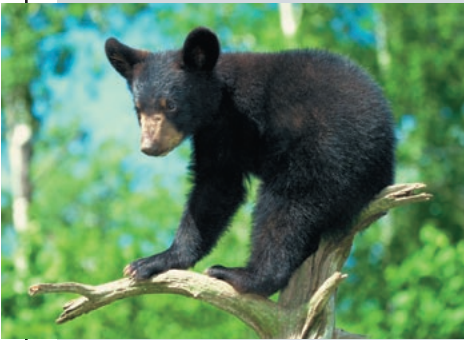
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Here are a few of the projects
Vancouver Foundation supported in 2007/2008

The bear facts



Vancouver Foundation is funding two projects to help protect our ursine neighbours:

Critter Care Wildlife Society in Langley provides short- and long-term care to injured or orphaned native mammal species, including 13 black bear cubs that were admitted last year (a 20 per cent increase over the year before). Critter Care will use a Foundation grant to repair aging and damaged animal enclosures, and to expand the number of enclosures for black bears, to cope with a dramatic increase in admissions.

Meanwhile, Get Bear Smart Society (GBS) received a grant from Vancouver Foundation to bear-proof problem areas in Whistler. By doing an audit on things that attract bears (e.g., unsecured garbage, berry bushes) and introducing more bear-proof containers in these areas, GBS aims to reduce human/bear conflicts and the number of bears destroyed each year.

*** Vancouver Foundation donated \$20,000 to Critter Care and \$15,000 to Get Bear Smart Society.**

Leaving the street

"It's much easier to believe in yourself when other people believe in you."

Street Youth Job Action (SYJA) is a social enterprise that provides mentoring and development opportunities for homeless youth in Vancouver.

Based out of the Directions Youth Services Hub, SYJA is set up to give homeless youth a chance to learn skills that will prepare them for the workforce – soft skills like teamwork, punctuality, communication, getting along with others, a strong work ethic, and what it means to be part of a community.

SYJA also helps create flexible casual, temporary and part-time jobs for multi-barriered youth. In doing so, it helps homeless youth to leave the streets, find affordable housing and develop the necessary skills to secure long-term employment.

*** Vancouver Foundation awarded SYJA a grant of \$100,000 over three years.**

Drive-in movies in Gastown

The drive-in movie is a classic form of entertainment whose popularity peaked in the car culture of the 1950s and early '60s. But with the advent of colour TV, VCRs, video rentals and rising property costs, they began to decline, leaving very few drive-in theatres in North America today.



However, Urban Republic and Cineworks recreated the drive-in movie experience in the heart of Vancouver, with their own contemporary spin. In September, the roof of an EasyPark parkade in Gastown was transformed into a drive-in theatre that welcomed cars, bikes and walk-in audiences to celebrate B.C. film. The theme of the series was "Vancouver stars as itself" and showcased films shot in the metro Vancouver area by B.C. filmmakers.

*** A \$7,500 grant from Vancouver Foundation allowed movie fans of all ages to enjoy local filmmakers in an "open air" theatre.**

Man in the Moon

A unique program for dads, uncles, granddads, and all male caregivers with babies up to 18 months old, Vancouver Public Library's Man in the Moon program is based on a simple concept: teach fathers and male caregivers how to get involved with their young children, right from the start. By teaching them how to play, sing, talk and read to their children, the program helps establish father-child bonds that will lay the foundation for the children's reading readiness, happiness and success later in school and in life.

There is a growing body of research (most recently conducted by UBC's Human Early Learning Partnership) that shows a father's involvement, especially from an early age, has an enormous impact on child health outcomes. Children who are deprived of their father's involvement early in life are much more likely to suffer from delayed cognitive, emotional and social development. The long-term outcomes for these children are: underachievement at school, poor social skill development, failure to graduate, and difficulties controlling impulsive and aggressive behaviour.



The Man in the Moon program is for men only and their young children. The men can be fathers, uncles, brothers, or any male caregiver with a child. The program is run out of libraries and community centres and is designed for men with varying degrees of literacy. Each program is led by a male facilitator. The hour-long sessions run evenings and weekends (when working caregivers can attend) for eight to 10 weeks.

*** Vancouver Foundation awarded VPL a grant of \$50,000 to expand Man in the Moon, and to research the possibility of offering it in other languages.**

The gift of transportation

Transportation can be the ticket that makes everything else possible. For low-income youth, refugees and immigrants, even the cost of a bus pass can be prohibitive. Vancouver Foundation granted \$83,000 to five organizations in the Lower Mainland to cover basic transportation costs for their clients. Three of the five – Directions, Broadway Youth Resource Centre and Urban Native Youth Centre – deal with at-risk or homeless youth. The Canadian Red Cross Society and Immigrant Services Society help immigrants and refugees adjust to life in their new home. For these citizens – who sometimes end up living far from where they need to work or go to school – the ability to get around can open the door to so many more things: getting to work, getting to school and gaining a foothold on a new life.



*** An \$83,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation helped mobilize low-income youth, refugees and immigrants in the Lower Mainland.**

Grants at a Glance

Here are a few of the projects
Vancouver Foundation supported in 2007/2008

Emily Carr – Sparking an interest in art

The Summer Institute for Aboriginal Teens is an intensive, four-week program developed by the Emily Carr Institute and aboriginal staff to specifically address the needs of aboriginal teens.

The program allows students to build on their prior experience in art, and experiment with traditional aboriginal methods of expression and contemporary approaches to artistic production. Participants have the opportunity to pursue an art, media or design education irrespective of their financial circumstances.

The pilot program culminated in a show of work by participants called *Ignition*, which ran at the Emily Carr concourse gallery until August 14.

By introducing them to the rigours, challenges and excitement of a summer institute in visual art and design, this program aims to encourage aboriginal teens to pursue a career in the world of art, media or design.

* Vancouver
Foundation's
\$13,000 donation
supported the
Summer Institute for
Aboriginal Teens.

After the windstorm

On December 15, 2006, a major storm struck Stanley Park with winds of more than 115 kilometres per hour. Hardest hit was the area around Prospect Point. In total, about 40 per cent of the park forest was affected, with an estimated 3,000 trees damaged.

The Stanley Park Environmental Art Project is a multi-layered initiative that will see six artists collaborating with ecologists and park stewards on a program of discussions and hands-on workshops. Developed in response to the public's overwhelming interest in the park and concern about windstorm damage, the goal of the project is to create opportunities to engage with nature through art, and explore new relationships with the natural environment of the park. For more information, visit www.vancouver.ca/spea.



* Vancouver Foundation
donated \$15,000 to the
Stanley Park Ecological
Society for this project.

A few drops of water



The Vancouver East Cultural Centre (VECC) opened its 2008 season with a splash as Wales' Volcano Theatre Company staged a water-based installation called *A Few Little Drops: The Extraordinary Life of Water*.

On the field of Britannia Secondary School, audiences were invited to explore a flood-wrecked house, walk inside a giant inflatable wave, and cross a strange watery landscape. The show explored the strange properties of water, its awesome power and beauty, and its fundamental role in maintaining life.

Given the environmental theme of the production, The Cultch also hosted a symposium, in collaboration with the British Council, on human water use, climate change and the interaction between these environmental issues and the arts.

* Vancouver
Foundation
awarded VECC
a grant of \$10,000
for the water-themed
project.

People helping people

Coast Mental Health promotes the recovery of people living with mental illness, and improves the lives of clients by providing practical help such as housing, jobs, community, rehabilitative social and recreational opportunities, food, clothing and basic life skills training.

Coast's Peer Support Program is based on the principle that people who share a disability have something to offer each other – something that cannot be provided by professionals.


Coast will train clients to become peer support workers, who will then work for six months, one-to-one, with other clients. Support workers are paid for their efforts and integrated into the existing program structure. The training they receive, and the application of various life skills, promotes not only the recovery of the support workers, but also the clients they are helping. The Peer Support Program will expand programming for support workers to all Coast-run housing and drop-in centres.

 **Vancouver Foundation granted \$150,000 to the Peer Support Program.**

The legend of Lillian

Lillian Alling was a young woman who was doing menial work in New York City. One day in 1927, she had had enough and decided to walk home – to Russia. Vancouver Opera (VO) is turning her story into a full-length opera titled *Lillian Alling*, which will be staged in October 2010 for VO's 50th anniversary. *Lillian Alling* focuses on our common quest to find home by exploring Lillian's journeys – her physical journey to find home and her spiritual journey to find peace. Lillian's journey took her on foot across the United States, north into Canada and Vancouver, and up the Yukon Telegraph Trail. Sporadic sightings up north trailed off and all that remains of her whereabouts is a mystery.



 **Vancouver Foundation donated \$100,000 to help bring *Lillian Alling* to the Vancouver Opera stage.**

Lights, camera, reflection!

In 1907, Seattle filmmaker William Harbeck


wrapped production on what was intended to be a short tourism film of Vancouver. His footage of downtown, shot from the front of a BC Electric streetcar, shows the city at the turn of the century.

Horse-drawn wagons on Hastings, pedestrians leaping out of the way of the Interurban streetcar, and the wilds of the West End. This valuable footage – the earliest surviving moving pictures of Vancouver – languished in the collection of an Australian film buff until the 1980s, when it was rediscovered and painstakingly restored by Library and Archives Canada.

To mark the film's centenary, the Vancouver Historical Society undertook a project to reshoot the film, showing exactly the same streets, and the changes that have occurred over the intervening 100 years.

A DVD was produced showing both films – circa 1907 and 2007 – together with "then and now" chapters of the city. The finished product is a learning resource for students, a portrait of Vancouver for visitors, a document for convention delegates' kits, and a model of historic film preservation.

For more information, visit www.cityreflections.ca.

 **Vancouver Foundation's \$7,500 grant helped make the film project possible.**



Every child is an

Bringing out the
Picasso in every kid



By PAUL HERATY

PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



“Is that art? Or is it mass production?”

Instructor Val Bati leads a group of students through the Artists for Kids Gallery in North Vancouver. They’ve just moved on from Ed Burtynsky’s *Oxford Tire Pile* and are now considering Douglas Coupland’s enigmatic, six-foot-tall *Toy Soldier*.

Hands fill the air . . . Grade 5 students with frantic fingers, surprisingly mature answers and even more questions.

The walls of this converted gymnasium, covered in paintings and photos by some of Canada’s top artists, can barely contain the bubbling energy and enthusiasm of these 20 youngsters. They peer up-close at works by

Guido Molinari, Jack Shadbolt, and Gordon Smith. They wonder at Inuit art by Kenojuak Ashevak and the mixed media of Betty Goodwin. They’re dying to touch everything. And given the chance, they crowd around *Ben*, a life-size calf by sculptor Joe Fafard – hundreds of little hands have rubbed Ben’s bronze nose till it shines.

This gallery is not the staid mausoleum of “Shh” and stern glances from docents. It’s a riot of colour and texture, a mash-up of styles from Bobak to Bateman, a noisy sampler of the best in modern Canadian art. This is where art comes alive for young people: where they get a personal tour of works by top artists; learn

artist



Artists for Kids Trust (AFK) – a very successful partnership between many of Canada’s finest visual artists and the North Vancouver school district.

He and his group have a unique mission: they are dedicated to bringing out the artist in every child. And the gallery is just one of the tools. There’s a buzz in the place, an excitement, and an urgency to their work. The clock is ticking. Research suggests that ages 10 and 11 are critical for children and art appreciation. Miss that window and you miss an important educational opportunity.

MacDonald and his group have been running hard, determined not to miss that window. And now they’re getting close to a major milestone in a journey that started 18 years ago.

In 1990, MacDonald approached artists Bill Reid, Jack Shadbolt and Gordon Smith with the idea of selling prints to raise money for arts education. Each artist had a background in teaching (in fact, Smith had taught MacDonald art at UBC in the early 1970s) and it wasn’t difficult to convince all three to participate.

Reid had recently created a ceremonial drum with an image of a grizzly bear painted in the traditional Haida colours of black and red. Smith suggested it might make a nice serigraph.

“Bill refined the design,” says MacDonald, “and we made an edition of 300 prints. We sold 65 the first night they were offered, at \$1,200 each. The final print in the series recently sold for \$4,250.”

That was the start. Bill Reid’s *Xhnuwaji/Haida Grizzly Bear* drum is now part of the Artists for Kids permanent collection comprising more than 300 works of Canadian art valued at over \$2.5 million.

“We have more than 40 artist ‘partner/patrons’ coast to coast involved in the AFK program – the biggest names in Canadian art,” says MacDonald. Robert Bateman, Edward Burtnysky, David Blackwood, Molly Lamb Bobak, Douglas Coupland, Joe Fafard, Ted Harrison, Kenojuak Ashevak, Guido Molinari, Jack Shadbolt, Gordon Smith and Michael Snow (to name just a few) have published prints with AFK, and the program has supported each artist with a major purchase.

“We’ve found a way to print money,” McDonald says, laughing. “Every year we publish three or four prints. We make \$250,000 a year, and spend every penny.”

Money from sales of these prints funds art education programs for 5,000 children every year. More than 60 classes a year from all over the Lower Mainland learn about the artists, work with the AFK collection, and make art themselves.

AFK runs an after-school program that reaches 600 students every year, plus a summer camp near Squamish. The program also sponsors master classes with patron artists and curates an annual exhibition for the public.

MacDonald is immensely proud of the fact that the program he started years ago is self-sustaining. But he’s also looking at the bigger picture. He freely admits that, after years of selling prints, he can’t keep doing this. “For 18 years we have been going hand to mouth, issuing prints, never sure if they’re going to sell, and running programs. And every year we sit down and say ‘How do we make this go again another year?’ We spend virtually everything we make. There’s no putting anything away for a rainy day.”

That’s where Vancouver Foundation comes in.

Vancouver Foundation has given AFK numerous substantial grants in the past to support exhibition programs and specific projects. In 2006, for example, the Foundation donated \$30,000 for *Vancouver School*, a major installation in which Douglas Coupland, Angela Grossmann, Attila Richard Lukacs, Derek Root and Graham Gillmore literally took apart an unused school gymnasium and reassembled it in the Artists for Kids Gallery. The project challenged perceptions of art, popular culture and school. It got national media coverage and was filmed for a TV special that aired on Bravo.

“Vancouver Foundation has been great,” says MacDonald. “But then they’re not there every year to sustain us . . . I think the Foundation understands our mission of nurturing first-class contemporary art. They’ve been very supportive of our work hosting these huge shows, and instrumental in helping us achieve our goal of an intense, curriculum-based project.”

More importantly, though, Vancouver Foundation is providing the structure for an endowment that MacDonald hopes will secure the future of the Artists for Kids program. The Gordon and Marion Smith Foundation for Young Artists Fund is managed by Vancouver Foundation. There is \$540,000 in the fund, and MacDonald hopes to raise that to \$5 million.

“The goal is to have an endowment that will

about perspective and shape and context; get a chance to see the best, question it and challenge assumptions; and create their own masterpieces in the adjacent classrooms.

Collette, one of the students, loves the class. “I like coming here,” she says in a brief moment of calm, between discussions of the works. “I like the part where we do artwork. I like to draw a lot at home. I painted an abstract painting for my grandma . . . When I grow up, I’d like to do something with the arts.”

This is music to the ears of Bill MacDonald and the team of people who run the gallery. MacDonald is a local arts educator in North Vancouver and the driving force behind the

Artists for Kids



Clockwise from top: Instructor Val Batyi takes questions about Joe Fafard's *Ben*; Collette explains to her teacher why she likes Guido Molinari's *Blue Quantifier*; Lauren is one of 5,000 young artists who take part in the Artists for Kids program every year.

make sure the work we've been doing exists in perpetuity," he says. "An endowment of \$5 million will give us operating funds every year without touching the principal."

According to MacDonald, the relationship with Vancouver Foundation is working well. "Through the Foundation, we received matching funds from the BC Arts Renaissance Fund, as well as a two-year operating grant from the Medici Fund (a Vancouver Foundation granting initiative) to hire a fundraiser . . . It's giving us a sense that there's light at the end of the tunnel."

The "end of the tunnel" is a brand-new, purpose-built Art Education Centre at 21st and Lonsdale in North Vancouver – 14,000 square feet of dedicated classrooms and a spacious new gallery for Artists for Kids (instead of the decommissioned school gym AFK has been operating out of for years).

MacDonald pulls out plans for the new building – they're among a stack of prints leaning against the wall in his office – and puts them on an easel for a virtual tour. He is every inch the proud founder/teacher/entrepreneur/funder and developer as he shows off the future home of the Artists for Kids program.

The site has been secured, money for the buildings set aside, and construction could start as early as late 2008. The plan is to open in the fall of 2010. For MacDonald, this will be the culmination of years of hard work – teaching, encouraging artists to take part, cajoling bureaucrats, selling prints, and keeping the program going on a shoestring.

Picasso once said "Every child is an artist . . . The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." Artists for Kids gives 5,000 young people



every year the chance to learn about and make art. In doing so, it is nurturing the next generation of Emily Carrs and Douglas Couplands. And ensuring that a rich Canadian heritage of creativity in the visual arts will continue. **VF**

For more information, visit www.artists4kids.com. To support Artists for Kids by donating to the Gordon and Marion Smith Foundation, visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca or call 604-688-2204.



Art in your pocket

If you want to see the art that started Artists for Kids – and is still making money for the program – look in your purse or wallet. Find a \$20 bill and look at the back. There, immortalized in yellow and rising like a sun behind the war canoe, is Bill Reid's *Xhuwaji/Haida Grizzly Bear* – the first print the program sold. **VF**

Paint by numbers

5,000: Schoolchildren AFK reaches every year with hands-on arts education

40: Canadian artists featured in the AFK collection

\$375 – \$5,000: Price range for AFK prints **VF**

Hitting the books again

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR

Miner's lettuce grows in shady places, explains Sharon, an anthropology student at Douglas College.

"The leaf is like a cup with a little flower that comes right out of the middle," she says, rounding her hand and tracing an imaginary stem with her fingers. She adds that because the plant is high in vitamin C, First Nations peoples shared it with the miners and settlers to help them ward off scurvy. "I don't know why it's one of my favourite plants. I just feel connected to them."

Sharon knows how hard it is to grow in shady places, but since returning to school something has changed. The 50-something woman has the unbridled joy of someone newly unleashed. And she has a vision: she wants to study ethnobotany at UBC and use her knowledge to write and illustrate books on First Nations plants.

"After the breakdown of my marriage I tried going back to work, but in order to get back into the workforce I had to upgrade my skills. So I thought, if I have to go to school anyway, why don't I follow my dream?"

Government loans helped her avoid welfare, but there were still rent and bills to pay, textbooks to buy, and a daughter and granddaughter to support. With rent of \$775 a month

and student loans totalling just over \$1,000 a month, she has just a couple hundred dollars left for everything else.

That's where Douglas College Foundation came in, providing over \$5,000 worth of financial assistance to Sharon since she returned to school.

"I wouldn't make it through the month without the bursaries," she says. "It relieves a lot of stress and anxiety over finances or having enough food to eat, not only for me but for every student that receives a bursary. And by doing that, the Foundation enables us to do a better job. It enables us to focus on our studies. That's where it's been a great relief for me."

Sharon is one of more than 1,800 students a year who receive financial assistance from Douglas College Foundation. Hazel Postma, the college's vice-president of external relations, says the Foundation is able to provide support to 15 per cent of the college's 12,000 students at its two campuses in New Westminster and Coquitlam.

"The *raison d'être* for our Foundation is bursaries and scholarships," says Postma, "and 95 per cent of our funds go directly to helping students. The rest buys equipment essential to specific programs."

With over \$10 million in investments, the Finance Committee at Douglas College Foundation decided to move close to \$6 million into an agency endowment at Vancouver

Foundation last year, adding to a previously established fund there.

Initially, Douglas College Foundation considered managing its own endowments, but realized that many of the investment firms and advisors they were looking at were already involved with Vancouver Foundation. "You had the investment bankers, the fixed income and the equities advisers we were considering. We have \$7 million and you have more than \$700 million, so you will get better rates. It seemed sensible to us to take advantage of Vancouver Foundation's expertise, as well as the economies of scale," says Postma.

The need for financial assistance at Douglas College is greater than ever, says Postma, because the college now has nine degree programs, which means more students are staying for four years instead of two. Many attend part time while working. Some are the first in their families to get a post-secondary education. Others are immigrants, single parents, or mature students like Sharon.

For Sharon, the support she has received from Douglas College and its Foundation has helped her choose a new path and reconnect to her First Nations heritage.

"It's important to everybody to find their passion, to dream big and take that leap," she says. "They've helped me gain my self-confidence. They've helped me know I can do it. They've taken away my fear." **VF**

PHOTO: iStockphoto

▶ BY CATHERINE CLEMENT
PHOTO: CATHERINE CLEMENT

A former Foundation Board member gazes into her crystal ball and looks at the future of philanthropy

Judith Hall is a dynamo: a pediatrician, geneticist, lecturer, educator, researcher, advocate, volunteer, member of the Order of Canada, award-winning academic and philanthropist.

Although Hall turned 69 this year and is technically retired, this enthusiastic, optimistic and high-energy woman could run circles around people half her age and has a calendar chock full of projects and meetings to prove it.

Hall is a huge fan of Vancouver Foundation, having served on advisory committees and the Board for more than 10 years.

Working with Vancouver Foundation, Hall was touched by how many people wanted to make a difference in their community. “For every grant application we reviewed, I knew there were dozens of people behind it: the staff in the agency who wrote the proposal, and the 10 to 12 Board members who supported it,” she explains.

“All of these people wanted to do good work and make our B.C. communities

better. Often they were asking for so little, and yet they accomplished so much with those dollars.”

She also realized that by working with Vancouver Foundation, “I was being exposed to organizations and initiatives I never would have heard about in any other way. These were not projects that were well known, and yet they are having a positive, lasting impact.”

Hall, who has set up a fund that will be created from her estate (i.e., a planned gift), wrestled with whether she should designate her fund to a particular issue or organization, or direct it to the Community Impact Fund. (The Community Impact Fund enables donors to pool their money and relies on experts in various fields to review grant proposals and recommend those initiatives that will have the most impact and address the highest needs in an area.)

In the end, Hall was influenced by a speech she heard by renowned science fiction author William Gibson. Back in

the early 1980s, while writing his best-seller *Neuromancer*, Gibson described a future with instant, worldwide communications (this was long before the Internet was widely available) and coined the term “cyberspace.”



No crys



While he foresaw much of what we take for granted today, Gibson confessed he never foresaw the cellphone. “That served as a reminder to me that we can’t predict the future,” Hall says seriously.

“How can I make decisions in 2008 about where my philanthropy dollars should be spent many years from now? I don’t know what the needs of the community will be in 50 years time. Why would I lock in my gifts to something that may no longer be relevant or may not be the most pressing issue of the day that, if I were alive, I would have wanted to support?”

“I want my funds to always address community needs. And the best way to do that is to leave it to the Foundation’s Community Impact Fund. Whatever community experts will be working with Vancouver Foundation in the future, they will be in the best position to make sure my donation has the most impact.”

Until she can find a crystal ball that works, Hall has found the best way to meet the future head on. **VF**

Crystal ball

If you build it, you can keep it

A unique project
is teaching
budding bike
mechanics

▶ By KIMBERLEY FEHR
PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



Jordan Guy built his own bike in the Earn-a-Bike program. Now he helps other teens, such as Anna Lusk (left) and Anita Shen (below) do the same.

with a \$6,500 grant, was the first to support the pilot project.

“Often, philanthropic organizations like Vancouver Foundation have a reputation – a bit of cachet – so when somebody down the line is approached for further funding and sees the startup funding came from a place like Vancouver Foundation it makes it a lot easier, gives it some legitimacy.”

The program is now officially run by PEDAL, and this year it expanded with After School Bikes, which brings Earn-a-Bike on location to public schools, as well as offering an on-demand program to special interest groups. Meanwhile, the original Earn-a-Bike is still going strong.

Thanks to funding from the First Nations Employment Society, PEDAL hired Jordan as a summer employee for their Free Bike Program, which is recycling at its finest. The program refurbishes bikes using recycled parts and donates most of them to people who need them. In 2007, they gave away 269 bikes. Some of the bikes are also sold at Our Community Bikes, a store on Main Street run by PEDAL.

On average, Jordan builds two bikes every three days, as well as helping teach Earn-a-Bike.

“At first it felt weird because a little while ago I did the course and I knew nothing about bikes, and now I’m helping teach it. But it feels good,” he says. Having a bike means he gets a lot more exercise; he doesn’t really take cars or buses anymore. He has been to Stanley Park, and did the Critical Mass Bike Ride in June, where thousands of cyclists take over the streets.

“An easy sell for the Earn-a-Bike Program is kids like bikes,” says Bhimji. “The program helps kids who don’t have bikes to access one, and all of the benefits of cycling: the health benefits, the mobility and empowerment that comes from getting themselves around.”

Bhimji says Earn-a-Bike also gives youth a rare opportunity to work with their hands, learn mechanical skills, and use a different part of their brains than they normally use in school.

Recycling is another fringe benefit. Says program instructor Matty Semkowich, “They’re taking things that look like garbage and realizing that they are completely serviceable and taking pride in that.” **VF**

For more information about the Earn-a-Bike Program, visit www.pedalpower.org, or contact Vancouver Foundation at 604-688-2204 (www.vancouverfoundation.ca).

Sixteen-year-old Jordan Guy is trying to tame a squeaky wheel. His nemesis of the day – a black mountain bike he’s building – hangs suspended from a rack in the air at the PEDAL Bike Depot in East Vancouver.

“There’s one part of the brake that squeaks really bad,” he says with a shy smile. “That’s not supposed to happen. I did everything you can do to make that stop and it still does it. That’s taken up my whole day.”

Jordan swapped out the brakes, used steel wool to take a layer off the metal rim, and he is still flummoxed, but undeterred. “I’ll probably figure it out tomorrow,” he says.

A few short months before Jordan landed a summer job at PEDAL, he didn’t know much about bike mechanics. He didn’t even have a bike. Since January, when his family moved back to East Vancouver after a short stint in Port Alberni, he had been bike-less. A member of the Nuu-cha-nulth First Nation, he heard about the PEDAL Earn-a-Bike Program through a friend, and came along for the ride, “‘cause it’s not very often you get to go to a course for free.”

The premise of Earn-a-Bike is simple. Disadvantaged youth age 12 to 18 learn bike mechanics while refurbishing a bicycle, and after successfully completing the program and a safety inspection, they get to ride off on their own two wheels.

“The Earn-a-Bike Program aims to attract kids who wouldn’t otherwise have a bike – kids



whose bikes got stolen, kids whose parents can’t afford one, kids in foster care – and get them excited about cycling,” says Omar Bhimji, the program’s manager.

Earn-a-Bike began as a partnership between PEDAL, which stands for Pedal Energy Development Alternatives, and Trips-for-Kids, a popular program sponsored by the Grandview Community Centre Association that takes kids from low-income neighbourhoods on mountain biking adventures. Trips-for-Kids was looking to take its program one step further with Earn-a-Bike, and PEDAL and Bhimji came on board to start up and run the program.

Bhimji believes Vancouver Foundation,

Knead some dough for education?

By PAUL HERATY

PHOTO: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER

"Pizza is a great way to make friends," says Sean DeGregorio, CEO of Panago Pizza. Now, thanks to a new staff scholarship program, it's also a way to help pay for university.

Stephanie Coghill is one of four Panago employees across Canada who were awarded \$750 scholarships in 2008. Coghill is a chef at the Panago outlet in Maple Ridge. She's worked there for two years.

get set up for their next job," says DeGregorio. "The scholarship fund is part of a larger staff retention strategy. But also we just thought it was the right thing to do . . . to try to help some of these young adults with their education."

Panago launched the scholarship fund at a convention in Kelowna in April 2007. A silent auction and golf tournament raised \$38,000, which the company matched, for a total of

planet to say anything bad about them. Why not go with what appears to be the premium organization in B.C. on this stuff? It was a slam dunk really."

Coghill is excited about her future and grateful for the support. "I'd been planning to go to school for quite a few years, and I needed all the help I could get . . . The owner really backed me up when I applied for the scholarship and wrote me a great reference letter."



"I really like it. It's a fun place to work," she says. "I like the atmosphere. I like the tension on a busy night. It's challenging."

Coghill is typical of many Panago employees: this is her first job; she's young (18, which also happens to be the average age of the company's 3,700 employees) and enthusiastic; and she's on her way to somewhere else.

"Frankly, this is a job that helps young adults

\$76,000. Then they needed to find someplace to set up the fund. "We didn't have a lot of criteria. We needed a reasonable return, and not too high a level of risk, and security," says DeGregorio.

"Once we looked at the history of Vancouver Foundation, and the reputation, it was a pretty easy decision. The credibility is what sold us. We couldn't find anybody on the

She is putting the \$750 scholarship toward the first year of a degree in education at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford this fall. **VF**

To find out more about corporate funds at Vancouver Foundation, visit online at www.vancouverfoundation.ca or call 604-688-2204.



Staying Young

A program in Peachland is transforming seniors' lives

BY PAUL HERATY
PHOTOS: JAMES MURRAY

By 8 a.m. Beach Avenue is already busy with people walking along the 11 kilometres of gorgeous public waterfront that line the edge of Okanagan Lake. Bliss Bakery is open and living up to its name. Patrons are already enjoying their first cup of coffee, seated on the patio, soaking up the morning sun and exchanging pleasantries.

The youngsters – anyone under 25 – are still asleep. They won't be up for hours. Meanwhile, the early crowd strides along the strand for a morning constitutional before the heat of the day. A few sport pedometers. They all have an informal but recognizable uniform – short-sleeved T-shirts, Bermuda shorts, blinding white socks, running shoes or sandals, topped off with sunglasses, a Tilley or ball cap, a deep tan, and invariably a big smile. »

As part of the Peachland Wellness Centre's fitness program, Judy Wyper checks her pedometer on an early morning walk.

Peachland Wellness Centre



Maureen Nason, Madison, and Margot Carson with the mosaic they made when seniors were matched with Grade 1 students from the local elementary school as part of an intergenerational program for the Peachland Wellness Centre.

Welcome to Peachland – Seniors Capital of Canada.

This small city 25 kilometres south of Kelowna has about 5,000 residents. According to the 2006 census, 25 per cent of these are over the age of 65 (nationally, only one in seven Canadians is a senior citizen – still a record high 13 per cent of the total population). That makes Peachland one of the oldest towns in the nation.

It's a combination of good weather and good genes that has turned Peachland into Palm Springs North. Aging boomers move here to retire, and those who live here want to stay. They're attracted by the dry climate, a surfeit of golf in the summer, not too much snow in the winter, and the friendly familiarity of a small town.

This unique combination of geography and demography also makes Peachland the perfect Petri dish to study aging.

Inside a small, unassuming house on 5th Street, staff and volunteers at the Peachland Wellness Centre have just completed the second phase of an important

research project that is helping seniors stay active, independent and in their homes longer. Vancouver Foundation is helping to support that project.

Wendy Howard and Olive Fielding are co-ordinators of the Aging in Place (AIP) project at the Peachland Wellness Centre. AIP is designed for seniors over the age of 70, and offers a variety of programs such as a morning coffee club, exercise and lunch programs, fall prevention workshops, art therapy, in-home meals, transportation services, grocery delivery, phone support, shopping assistance, and an intergenerational project with the local elementary school. All programs are offered at little or no cost to clients.

"AIP is a pilot project intended to help Peachland seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible," says Howard. "By linking seniors with volunteers, we help with daily living activities and provide social integration in the community."

The first six months of the year-long project were funded by the

Union of B.C. Municipalities, and a \$20,000 grant from Vancouver Foundation enabled the Wellness Centre to continue for another six months until May 2008, when the pilot project completed.

The findings were not surprising. Program participants reported dramatic improvements in their quality of life after attending AIP programs. Their health and fitness improved, and they felt safer in their homes and more connected to the community.

Ironically, even the AIP volunteers, many of whom were seniors themselves, reported improvements in their lives as well. By helping to transport program participants, deliver meals and offer workshops, volunteers stayed active in the community and felt more useful through their service to others.

"Seniors want to stay independent," says Howard. "They want to stay in their home. If we can get someone to come in and help with cleaning or meals, and offer programs to keep them socially and physically active, then we can keep seniors over

70 healthier . . . This program saves health-care dollars and improves the quality of life for participants.

"Now that the Aging in Place pilot is over, we're looking at ways to continue offering these support programs because they have demonstrated value. We're also looking at the viability of more non-profit housing in the community."

Interest in programs like Aging in Place will only increase as our population ages. According to the 2006 census, Canadians aged 55 to 64 are the fastest-growing demographic in the country, accounting for 3.7 million people. That's a 28 per cent increase since the 2001 census.

Baby boomers are approaching retirement, and programs like Peachland Wellness Centre's Aging in Place will become more important as a model for successful aging as we all explore the growing part of growing old. **VF**

To learn more, visit www.peachlandwellnesscentre.ca, or contact Vancouver Foundation at 604-688-2204 (www.vancouverfoundation.ca).

Measuring Our Vital Signs



► BY CATHERINE CLEMENT

How do we perceive our community?

And how does our perception compare with reality?

What are the people of Metro Vancouver most concerned about? What do they feel is going well and where is improvement needed? Where do they believe we should collectively put our energy if we want to ensure our community is as healthy, prosperous and equitable as it can be?

These are the questions Vancouver Foundation attempts to answer through its *Vital Signs for Metro Vancouver* report. As a community foundation, it is critical that the organization's staff and board understand the community it serves. For the last three years, the Foundation's *Vital Signs* report has delved into the perceptions and the statistics behind the issues shaping the Vancouver region.

On October 7, the 2008 *Vital Signs* report was released to the public. It indicated that citizens in the region generally feel good about our communities' arts and culture (citizens rated it a B). They also tend to give respectable marks (B-) for our region's health and wellness, learning, safety, work and civic engagement (i.e., belonging and leadership).

On the other hand, housing, transportation,

getting started in Canada, and the gap between rich and poor are areas of growing concern. The full report can be viewed online at www.vancouverfoundationvitalsigns.ca.

"We are proud to say *Vital Signs* does not sit on the shelf. The results of our 2006 and 2007 reports have shaped Vancouver Foundation's work profoundly," notes Jake Kerr, chair of the Foundation. "Those reports highlighted community concerns in two major areas: homelessness, and the need to help immigrants integrate successfully, particularly through employment. As a result of those findings, the Foundation launched a major new initiative last year to tackle homelessness and its root causes. We are also part of another major project designed to reduce employment barriers to new Canadians."

Faye Wightman, president and CEO, sees another interesting trend in the report. "What becomes clearer with each *Vital Signs* report is how many issues in our community are interconnected. For example, finding affordable housing is a major challenge for many citizens. Some are forced to move further away from where they work

so they can afford to live. That, in turn, makes transportation a larger concern. If most people use their automobile to commute, that impacts our environment and our health. Long commutes also affect the amount of free time people have in which they can volunteer, enjoy the arts, engage in recreation or visit family and friends."

Wightman adds that if someone is working for minimum wage, as many new Canadians are, then the need for an effective and affordable public transportation system becomes even more crucial to their quality of life. "This one example demonstrates how housing, work, transportation, environment, health and civic engagement are all intertwined."

Recognizing and understanding these interconnections is vital to Vancouver Foundation. To fully address any issue, the Foundation needs to be able to understand how the threads of a problem connect to other aspects of life in our community. Only then can the community foundation, together with its donors, the organizations it funds and relevant outside agencies, tackle the challenges in a way that addresses the root causes. **VF**

PHOTO: iStockphoto

Following the paper trail

By CATHERINE CLEMENT
PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



Origami – the art of paper folding – has long been relegated to the far corner of the craft store, considered simply a hobby or a child’s pastime. That view holds true even in Japan, the country long associated with the tradition of paper folding.

However, an original, new play called *The Life of Paper* reveals paper folding to be a beautiful, complicated art form whose journey is inextricably linked with the history of paper itself.

“I had no idea of the history of paper folding,” enthuses Heidi Specht, artistic director of Vancouver-based Pangaea Arts and the director/writer of *The Life of Paper*. “The journey of paper and origami is intertwined. It is a fascinating story.” »

The play traces the history of paper and paper folding from its origins in second-century China, through its movement into the rest of Asia, and along the Silk Road to the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

“The story of paper shows us how knowledge and culture were transferred between people in the past,” adds Specht. It was war – in particular, captured Chinese soldiers – that brought paper from the Orient to the Arab world.

In *The Life of Paper*, all the sets, props (including musical instruments), wigs and most of the costumes are made from folded paper. The unusual sets include a 13-foot-tall origami tree complete with owl, two armies of life-size soldiers, as well as the large, green dragon that appears in the last scene.

The extraordinary visuals are complemented by a range of performance styles. As each part of the story of paper moves

through different time periods in different parts of the world, the play switches from Chinese opera to shadow puppets, to mime, stand-up comedy and modern theatre.

The artistic mastermind behind all the paper folding is world-renowned origami artist Joseph Wu. A resident of Vancouver, 38-year-old Wu designs and folds complicated figures, from mythical creatures to animals, people and objects. His paper creations have appeared in commercials, in editorials and in print advertising in such well-known publications as the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker* and *Rolling Stone*.

Being the chief artist for *The Life of Paper* was a labour of love for Wu. Three years in the making, hours and hours of designing and folding the sets and objects used in the play, and directing dozens of paper-folding volunteers, meant Wu had little time for his young

family. “But I wanted to help people learn about a piece of history that is obscure.”

Wu also wanted audiences to see paper folding today as an art form – one that involves complex geometries, intricate detail, delicate papers and creative expression all rolled into one.

“It is my hope that *The Life of Paper* will help bring a greater awareness of modern origami to art lovers everywhere.”

Besides the theatrical production, *The Life of Paper* also included an exhibition of origami artists, as well as workshops and lectures. These additional elements helped to deepen the audience’s appreciation for and understanding of the topic, and are common in Pangaea productions.

Vancouver Foundation supported the development of *The Life of Paper* with a \$15,000 grant. It is not the first time the community foundation has funded a project by Pangaea Arts, which describes itself as an “intercultural, interdisciplinary world arts organization.”

The group focuses on introducing Canadian audiences to stories, traditions and performance styles from around the world, often blending different styles to create signature pieces that are both unique and educational. They are fond of introducing audiences to little-known histories.

Started 10 years ago, Specht explains why she created Pangaea Arts. “We weren’t seeing the kind of live theatre that reflected this community, which is very diverse. Some of the stories, histories and traditions of our diverse communities have been forgotten. At the same time, we knew of professional artists and performers who immigrated to Canada and were now relegated to performing in amateur community productions.”

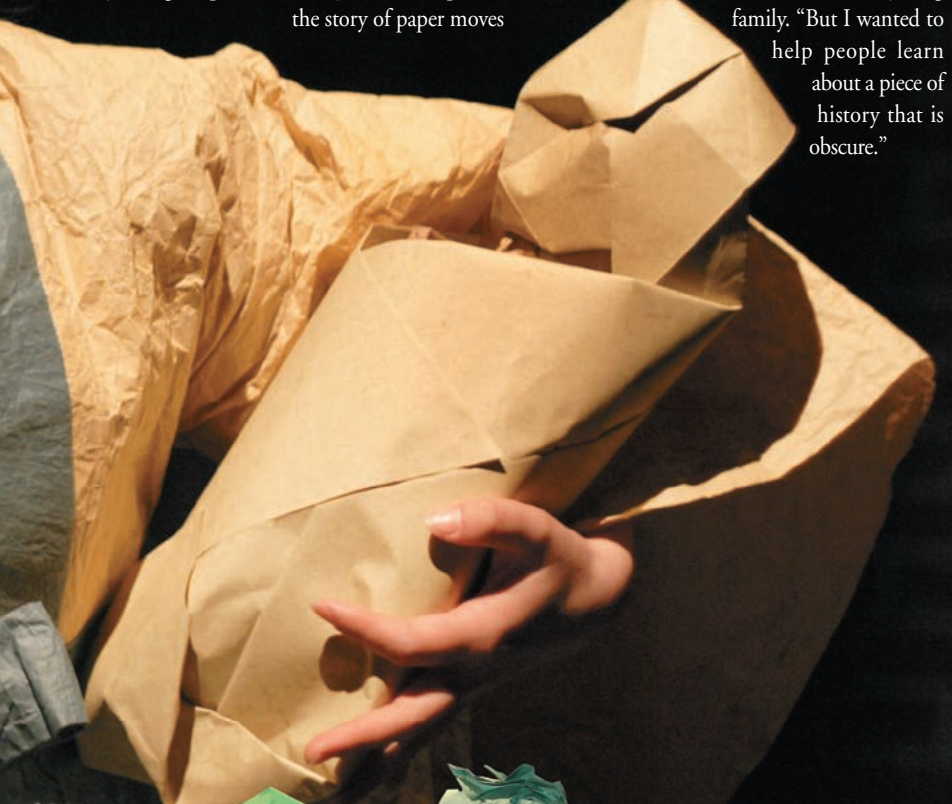
The name of the company, Pangaea, is inspired by the theoretical single continent that is believed to have existed about 200 to 250 million years ago. It serves as a metaphor for Specht’s desire to bridge the gaps between cultures, and mix old traditions with the new.

“Vancouver Foundation has been one of our biggest supporters of the type of work we are doing with Pangaea Arts,” notes Specht.

As for what is next for *The Life of Paper*? Both Wu and Specht hope to take it on the road so more audiences can come to appreciate the story of origami and the magnificent ways paper can be shaped and adapted.

Looks like the paper dragon will be thrilling more audiences in the days to come. **VF**

More information on Pangaea Arts is available at www.pangaea-arts.com, or to view Joseph Wu’s origami artwork visit www.origami.as/home.html. Contact Vancouver Foundation at 604-688-2204 or visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca.



Balancing tradition & innovation

BY PAUL HERATY
PHOTO: JASON LANG

As the general director of Vancouver Opera (VO), James Wright is ultimately responsible for all programming, artistic and administrative functions of this popular company, including strategic and artistic planning, fund development and government relations. He manages an annual budget of \$9 million, and has stick-handled some of the most innovative, ambitious and most expensive productions ever mounted by the company. He has worked in opera management for 30 years in companies across North America. Not bad for a “boy from the Midwest” who got into the opera world by accident.

“I needed a job,” says Wright. “I was a young actor living in Kansas, out of work, and the Kansas City Opera Company advertised a six-week job for a gofer.” Wright saw the ad, applied, and two years later he was the number-two person in the company.

While it may have been luck – combined with a background in theatre, an acting degree, 10 years of piano and a facility with the French horn – that helped launch his opera career, it was a love of the art form and a willingness to move that sustained it, and eventually brought Wright to Vancouver.

“If you want to grow professionally, you

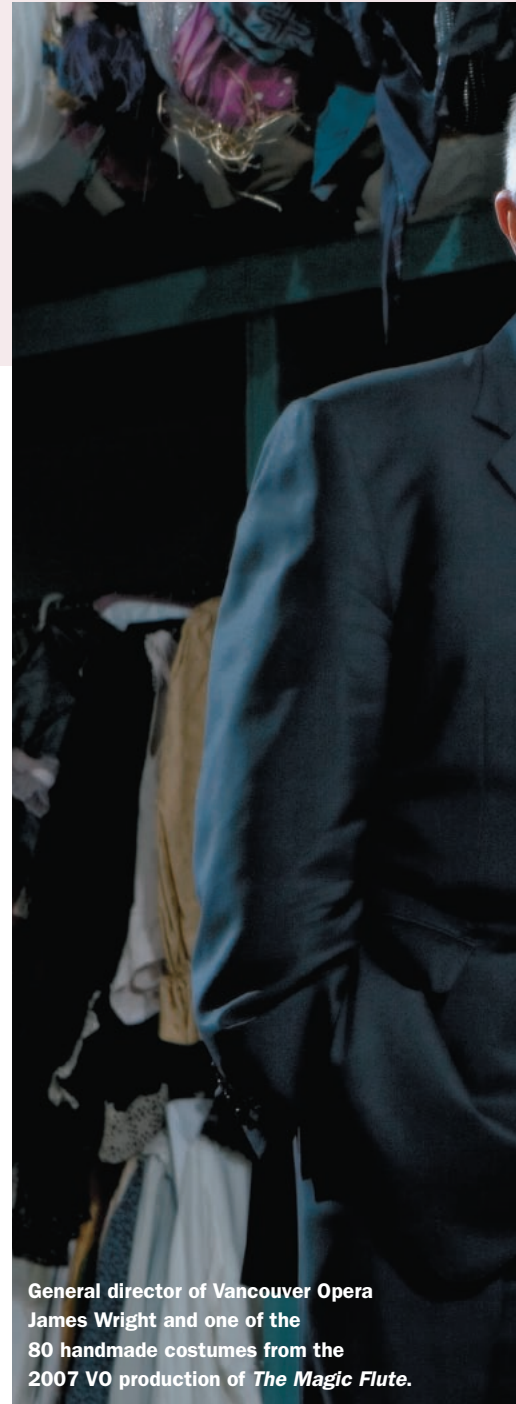
have to move around. You can’t just go to the opera company down the street like you can with a bank.”

Wright started in the American Midwest, and literally criss-crossed the continent as an opera manager. He worked in Kansas City; Tulsa, Oklahoma; spent five years in Anchorage, Alaska; and 10 years in Charlotte, North Carolina, before being headhunted to Vancouver in 1999.

Vancouver Opera was founded in 1958 by a group of dedicated volunteers who hired the company’s first artistic director, Irving Guttman. According to Wright, Guttman created a taste for opera here. “From the very beginning he brought the finest singers to Vancouver, like Plácido Domingo and Joan Sutherland, some before they were well-known.”

“Vancouver audiences know good singing when they hear it. They love good voices, and they are very appreciative of innovative physical productions,” says Wright. Vancouver has a subscription base of 6,500 to 7,000, which is about average in North America. Keeping that audience entertained can be difficult.

“It’s a real challenge for the whole opera field, to balance the great favourite works that bring in the audiences, while also developing



General director of Vancouver Opera James Wright and one of the 80 handmade costumes from the 2007 VO production of *The Magic Flute*.

new work and keeping the art form healthy and alive. It’s a much riskier proposition to do contemporary work because the audiences aren’t familiar with it and so they’re smaller. And new work is usually more expensive.”

Like other companies, Vancouver Opera does the standards – *Carmen*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*, *Madama Butterfly* – every five to seven years, and this pays for the more experimental works. It’s striking that fine

Never respect men merely for their riches, but rather for their philanthropy. We do not value the sun for its height, but for its use.
– Gamaliel Bailey, journalist



“It’s been a terrific experience, and I am very, very impressed,” says Wright. “My experience with the committee led me to believe that it would be a good place for me to put some of my own limited resources, because I trusted the process. The Foundation has a great reputation.”

Wright is also an avid birder, and though he can’t devote the time he’d like to the hobby, he is very concerned about loss of bird habitat and migratory paths. So he chose to dedicate money from the fund he is setting up to environmental causes and animal welfare.

“I didn’t [fund] culture because I do my own giving . . . I really believe in supporting environmental and ecological causes, but I don’t have the combination of time, energy, discipline and knowledge to do the kind of research to make me feel good about where my money is going. So I leave the decision up to Vancouver Foundation. If those committees are working as well as the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee, I trust them.

“I must say one more thing about my fund, and I think it’s really important. The only way I could get serious about starting a fund at Vancouver Foundation was when I found out about start-up funds. To be able to start a fund with a couple thousand dollars and build it is the only way lots of us can do it.”

A “start-up fund” enables donors to build an endowment fund over a number of years. You must deposit a minimum \$1,000 to begin, but then you have up to 10 years to build your fund to the \$10,000 mark. You can start

to make grants from your fund once the full \$10,000 in capital has been donated.

“I thought to myself, ‘I can do that.’ And I’m actually ahead of schedule in my contributions to my fund, because I want it to start paying out. So that motivated me to get started. And that’s motivating me to build it. I think it’s important for people to know that you don’t have to be wealthy to start a meaningful fund at Vancouver Foundation.” **VF**

balance in an environment of rising costs that can be challenging. Eight years ago, the average cost of a local production was \$650,000. Now, that cost has risen to almost \$1 million.

Last season, VO mounted its most expensive production to date – a First Nations version of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* that came in just under \$1.4 million. Wright is currently planning an even bigger, more expensive production for the 2009/2010 season, and VO’s 50th anniversary.

“We’re very excited about that. And I’m working on the 2010/2011 season as well.”

Along with a busy work schedule, Wright also volunteers with Vancouver Foundation. He’s in his second three-year term, serving on the Foundation’s Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. The committee has representation from across the province, from independent artists, large and small organizations, and people from all walks of cultural life.

Peace it Together

A Tale of 2 Cities

Resolving
world conflict,
one teenager
at a time

BY PAUL HERATY

PHOTOS: TIFFANY BROWN COOPER



Reviewing the shot: (from right) instructors Michael Mann and Claudia Medina Culos give feedback, while Katelyn Jameff (Canadian), Shadi Mansour (Palestinian), Alexandra Boskovich (Israeli) and Ryan Thom (Canadian) look on.

Nada Anati and Illy Auerbach both live in the same country – only about 115 kilometres apart in fact – yet they had to travel halfway round the world to talk. The geography of peace doesn't always make sense.

Nada is Palestinian, Illy is Israeli. Ordinarily, they would never meet. Now they are fast friends, thanks to a B.C.-based program called “Peace it Together,” which brought them – together with 28 other teenagers – to the west coast of

Canada, and idyllic Bowen Island, for a bold experiment in conflict resolution. And Vancouver Foundation was part of the excitement.

Peace it Together is a program that educates Palestinian, Israeli and Canadian youth to work toward peace. In an intensive three-week retreat, youth aged 16 to 18 are taught creative and practical conflict resolution skills and the basics of filmmaking. They work together in teams to create short films about peace and conflict. For many participants, this is the first time they

have ever had face-to-face contact with “the other side.”

Over the three weeks, some become friends; some come away with a deeper understanding, and another point of view; others just have fun, for the first time in years. All are changed by the experience.

Peace it Together was founded in 2003 by Adri Hamael, a Palestinian-Canadian, and Reena Lazar, a Jewish-Canadian. The initial program in 2004 brought five participants from

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now.



Palestine and Israel. It proved so successful that in 2006, they raised enough money to bring even more youth, and to include filmmaking as one of the prime activities. Vancouver Foundation is contributing \$50,000 over two years to the project. The Righteous Persons Foundation, a group founded by filmmaker Steven Spielberg, also recognized the value of Peace it Together by donating \$25,000.

At the end of July 2008, 30 youth arrived from Palestine, Israel and Canada for the third

instalment. For some participants, the journey takes days and can be nerve-wracking.

Shu'fat Refugee Camp, Jerusalem

Shu'fat camp is a city within a city, with 35,000 inhabitants – all Palestinian. There is one elementary school, no

hospital, a high rate of unemployment, and few services, mostly provided by the UN. The camp is a series of crowded, dun-coloured buildings.

Nada was born in the camp and has spent most of her 18 years there. She is articulate, pretty, and wears a hijab – a scarf that wraps all but her face, concealing her dark hair and proclaiming her Muslim faith. Her soft voice conceals an iron will; a will born from 18 years of dust, heat and the daily grind of security checkpoints and ID cards. »

Peace it Together



Left: Tentmates Illy and Nada. Above: (from right) Instructor Erik Paulsson helps Mahmoud Jaabari (Palestinian) and Omar Chu (Canadian) with their interview shot.

Nada's journey to Canada for the Peace it Together workshop reveals the strength of her resolve. At the airport in Tel Aviv she was taken aside and told she had to submit to a strip search "for reasons of security." When the guard demanded she remove her underwear as well, Nada refused.

"I told the security guard, 'If this is the price to travel . . . if I have to take off all my clothes to go to Canada, then I am not going.' I was very angry . . . I am going to make peace."

The guard eventually backed down, passed a metal detector over her body, and Nada was allowed to get on the plane that brought her to Vancouver, and eventually to this idyllic 15-hectare site on Bowen Island.

"Everything was new here, and big. In the refugee camp, nothing is green. And everything is green here."

Nada came to Peace it Together to tell Canadians and Israelis about the plight of her people.

"I came here to this camp because I have a message for the Israelis and the Canadians . . . We need to stop the killing. We are losing and they are losing. I would like them to understand what life is like in the refugee camp. I have thought maybe I can make a film about my camp, the people there . . . I would like the whole world to know about my country. Some

countries think in a bad way about my country and my people. I would like to show the good things about my people."

Qiryat Tiv'on, Israel

A small town of 16,000, Qiryat Tiv'on is located 15 kilometres southeast of Haifa. Small enough and just far away enough to avoid the rockets of Hezbollah. It overlooks Zvulun and Jezreel valleys. It's known for the beauty of its natural setting and strong environmental, arts and mountain biking communities.

Illy has spent most of her 16 years there. She is artistic, tall, slender, earnest, and laughs easily. When she stands, her legs and feet slowly move between first and second position, unconsciously revealing her years of ballet training.

Illy has never met a Palestinian from Gaza or the West Bank. Her limited experience is with the few Palestinians who live within Israel and have a blue ID card, and thus can travel freely. Illy is Nada's tentmate at Peace it Together. She speaks about the intensity of her experience in heavily accented English.

"I was really nervous at first here. I felt guilty. Everyone has the right to freedom . . . In daily

life it's really hard to meet them [Palestinians]. Here, we get to know each other. For seven days we talked. Every day somebody cried . . . Now we feel like we know each other.

"I think it's really important for people to know the facts. And it's OK that we don't agree about everything."

Illy wants to keep in touch with the people she has met at Peace it Together. "I want to visit them in the West Bank, to see things for myself," she says. "My roommate Nada is from a refugee camp in Jerusalem. It would be really powerful to see things there for myself."

Over the last 60 years, some of the greatest minds and most powerful politicians have grappled with the conflict in the Middle East without success.

But Adri Hamael and Reena Lazar are thinking differently. They are starting small. By harnessing the will (and the goodwill) of young people like Nada and Illy, they are making incremental positive changes in how Israeli and Palestinian youth see each other. Through Peace it Together, they are changing the world, one teenager at a time. **VF**

To find out more, go to www.peacetogether.ca, call 604-688-2204 or visit www.vancouverfoundation.ca.

Giving 101

*Something old, something new
Something borrowed, something blue
And a silver sixpence in her shoe.*



PHOTO: Getty Images

When Tom and Brittany decided to tie the knot last year, they wanted to put a new twist on this old saying. They wanted to do something a bit different, and use their special day as a way to give back to their community.

Both in their 30s, and having lived solo for a few years, they already had everything they needed to set up house. The last thing they wanted was yet another toaster oven or set of sheets.

So they set up a wedding fund. Instead of buying presents for the happy couple, friends and family were encouraged to donate to the fund. By the time the confetti had settled, they had raised \$10,000 – enough for a fund at Vancouver Foundation. The money is invested by the Foundation and the returns are distributed to the charities of Tom and Brittany's choice.

According to MyCanadianWedding.com, the average cost of a wedding in Canada is \$20,000 to \$30,000 – even higher if planned in a major city such as Vancouver or Toronto. Given that expense, many couples are looking at ways of incorporating their ideals and values into their special day, and weddings with a cause are becoming increasingly popular. Websites such as JustGive.org offer many ideas for newlyweds who want to make their ceremony more socially responsible.

For Tom and Brittany, starting a new life together was more than a chance to share their love; it was an opportunity to share their good fortune, and to put that silver sixpence to good use for the community at large. **VF**

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